A DISCOURSE Concerning *The Inventions of Men* IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD.

By the Right Reverend
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A DISCOURSE Concerning The Inventions of Men IN *The Worſhip of GOD.*

The INTRODUCTION.

OUR Bleſſed Saviour has taught us, That there are ſome Ways of Worſhiping God, which have ſo great a Mixture of *Humane Invention* in them, that they are *Vain* and Unacceptable to Him, *Mark* vii 7. *In vain* (ſaith He) *do they Worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* This obligeth every Man who has a Concern for his Soul, to examine carefully the Worſhip he offers to God, whether it be ſuch as God has inſtituted; leſt his Service ſhould be re-

jected with that Cenſure in the Prophet, *Who has required this at your hands?* But more-eſpecially it concerns the Paſtors of the Church, who have the Direction of the Publick Worſhip of God, to be careful in Examining this Matter, that they may be able to ſatisfie their own Conſciences, as well as the People's committed to their Charge, concerning the Purity of the Worſhip which they practiſe Themſelves, and recommend to Others.

II. It has pleaſed God, in his Providence, to make Me an Overſeer over ſome part of his Flock in this Kingdom; and I look upon it to be my Duty, to uſe my Endeavours to Inſtruct Thoſe that are committed to my Charge, in the Worſhip of God, according to the Rules he has preſcribed; and to Warn ſuch as I conceive to ſwerve from them, of their Miſtakes. I hope it will be of Uſe and Satisfaction to Thoſe that joyn with Me in the Publick Worſhip of God, to find, on Examination, That what they there practiſe, is agreeable to God's Inſtitution. And as to thoſe that think otherwiſe, I perſuade my ſelf, that an Admonition in the Spirit of Meekneſs can give them no juſt Offence, but rather be of Uſe to them alſo, by obliging them to Examine and Reviſe their Ways, that they may correct their Judgments, if,

if, from what I offer, they ſhall ſee Reaſon for it.

III. In order to help thoſe concerned to make a true and impartial Judgment in theſe Matters, I deſire them to conſider,

1*ſt. That it belongs only to God, to give Rules how He will be Worſhipped.* This, I ſuppoſe, will be granted by all, ſince it ſeems to be a Truth naturally implanted in the Minds of Men, and univerſally acknowledged in all Times.

2*dly*, I take it for a Truth agreed to by the generality of Proteſtants, *That the Holy Scriptures contain the Revelations of God's Will, concerning his Worſhip.*

3*dly*, From theſe Two, we may reaſonably inferr, That it concerns us to keep as cloſe as we can to thoſe Directions which God has been pleas'd to afford us in his Word, without Adding to, Omitting, or Altering any thing that He has there laid down. For, ſince God has vouchſafed us a certain Direction for his Worſhip in the Holy Scriptures, it is to be ſuppoſed, that all Ways of Worſhip are diſpleaſing to Him, that are not expreſly contained or warranted by Examples of Holy Men mentioned therein.

4*thly*, We muſt obſerve, That the Worſhip of God is either Inward or Outward The Inward Worſhip of God, conſiſts in the

Inward Homage and Subjection of our Minds to him. The Outward, conſiſts of ſuch Acts and Duties as ſerve to expreſs this Inward Subjection of our Souls; or that promote, encreaſe, or contribute towards it. Thus, for Inſtance, Vocal Prayer is a Part of Outward Worſhip; becauſe it expreſſes the Inward Dependance of our Souls on God. Thus, Reading the Word of God, is a Part of the ſame; becauſe therein we acknowledge our Subjection to Him, and to his Laws, and uſe it as a Means to Promote and encreaſe this Subjection. Thus, Celebration of the Sacraments, is a Part of the ſame Worſhip; becauſe in them we not only expreſs our Dependance on God for his Grace, but likewiſe oblige and bind our ſelves to ſerve Him. And the ſame holds in all Outward Acts of Worſhip.

5*thly*, We muſt remember, That 'tis in theſe Outward Acts that we are more immediately concerned as Publick Worſhippers; for we cannot know the Inward Worſhip which Men pay to God in their Minds, but as it appears to us by theſe Outward Acts: And generally, when we ſpeak of the Publick Worſhip of God, we mean this Outward; and concerning it, are the great Diſputes and Differences among us; all of us being agreed as to the Inward, and of what ſort that ought to be.

IV. Ha-

IV. Having premiſed theſe few things, which, I hope, will be granted by all; I ſhall proceed directly to my propoſed Undertaking; and ſhall, with the greateſt Fairneſs and Impartiality I can, Examine and Compare the Worſhip of God, which is directed and warranted by Scripture, as well with that which is preſcrib'd and practis'd by our Church, as with that which is practis'd by ſuch as differ from us.

V. Now, if we conſider the Ordinary Service of God, as preſcrib'd and practis'd in Scripture, we ſhall find the Main Subſtantial Parts of it to be theſe Five: *Viz.*

Praiſes,
Prayers,
Hearing,
Bodily Worſhip: And,
Celebration of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Chriſt.

The Method I ſhall take in Diſcourſing of each of theſe, ſhall be,

Firſt, To ſhew what the Holy Scriptures direct concerning them particularly.

Secondly, I ſhall conſider the Practice of our Church, with relation to thoſe Directions and Examples. And,

Thirdly, The Practice of Proteſtant Diſſenters.

CHAP. I.

Of Praiſes.

SECT. I.

What the Holy Scriptures preſcribe concerning them.

I. FIrſt then, as to the *Praiſes* of God. The Scriptures both of the Old and New Teſtaments require the Uſe of the *Pſalms*, in offering up Praiſes to God. We find in the Old Teſtament, 2 *Chron.* 29. 30. *Hezekiah the King, and the Princes, commanded the Levites to ſing Praiſes to the Lord with the words of David, and of Aſaph; and they ſang with gladneſs.* This Command of *Hezekiah* proceeded from God, and was approved by him. The ſame way of Praiſing God continued in the Jewiſh Church till our Saviour's time: And after that, we have yet a more poſitive Command for the Uſe of them by the Apoſtle, *Epheſ.* 5. 19. *Speaking to your ſelves in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs.* And *Col.* 3. 16 *Let the words of Chriſt dwell in you richly, in all wiſdom, teaching and admoniſhing one another in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs; ſinging, and making melody,*

lody, with grace in your hearts, to the Lord. I think there is no room to doubt, but by the *Pſalms*, &c. in theſe places, is meant the *Book* of *Pſalms*, which the Holy Ghoſt has left for this purpoſe to the Church.

II. Though the Scriptures recommend to us *Singing* of Pſalms, yet in ſome Caſes they *allow* us to *Say* them. I will not inſiſt on thoſe places of Scripture that ſeem to *require* us to do ſo, (ſuch as *Pſal.* 118. 2. *Let Iſrael now* ſay, *that his mercy endureth for ever: let the Houſe of Aaron now* ſay, *and let them that fear the Lord now* ſay, *&c.*) becauſe theſe Expreſſions being Poetical, may be ſo interpreted, as to mean *Singing*; though there is no Neceſſity of reſtraining the general Command of *Saying* or *Speaking* the Praiſes of God to *Singing* only. We find in Scripture ſeveral ſacred Hymns; particularly of *Hannah*, the Bleſſed Virgin, *Zacharias*, and *Simeon*, and the Saints in Heaven, *Rev.* 7. 12. & 11. 17. which are ſaid to have been *Said* by them reſpectively; and the Circumſtances in the Story do not make it probable that they were ſung. From all which we may reaſonably inferr, That where People can ſing, they are obliged to do it, in Obedience to God's Command: But where, through any Defect of Nature or Art, they cannot *Sing* Decently, they may be diſpenſed with *Saying*.

ing. Only People ought not by this Indulgence to be encouraged to neglect Singing altogether; or to think that God doth not require it of them, when by a little Pains or Induſtry they may attain to the Art of decently performing it in his Service.

III. 'Tis certain, the Word of God recommendeth to us Pſalms and Hymns in *Proſe*, for our Praiſing God. If we look into the Songs of the Bleſſed Virgin, of *Zacharias*, or *Simeon*, we ſhall find them all in *Proſe*; and ſuch are the Songs of the *Bleſſed*, which they are repreſented Singing, in the *Revelations*, particularly *Chap.* 5. 9 & 15. 3. As to the Hebrew Pſalms, 'tis evident, that they are Poetical; but the Poetry of them conſiſts rather in the Style and manner of Expreſſion, than in any certain Meaſures or Verſes; which thoſe that have ſearched moſt narrowly into them, have yet been able to diſcover, ſo as to ſatisfie an indifferent Reader. But whatever Poetry there may be in them, we cannot find, by any of the ancient Tranſlations which were made uſe of by the Church, in our Saviour's, or his Apoſtles time, or in the Ages immediately following, that they or the firſt Chriſtians did ſing any thing in *Verſe*; but we are ſure that they ſung Hymns in *Proſe*: So that we have no certain Scriptural Warrant for the Uſe

Uſe of Verſe or Metre in the Praiſes of God.

Perhaps ſome may fanſie that Verſe or Meaſure was not in uſe in thoſe Countries, and that therefore they ſung their Songs in Proſe; but this is a Miſtake; Poetry and Verſes were then in thoſe places where the Pſalms were tranſlated, in great requeſt; and at the higheſt perfection, when the New Teſtament was penned, and yet we have no Example therein of their Uſe in the Praiſes of God.

And it is very manifeſt that this proceeded from Choice, not Neceſſity: For if the Holy Ghoſt had thought Verſe neceſſary for Divine Pſalms, we may preſume he would have inſpired ſome of the Holy Men in Scripture, when Extraordinary Gifts were ſo common, either to Tranſlate the Pſalms of the Old Teſtament into Verſe, or elſe to Compoſe ſome of the other Hymns that are recorded in the New, after that way: But neither of theſe having been done, 'tis at leaſt a preſumption that we may praiſe God as acceptably in Proſe as in Verſe

And there is one thing further to be conſidered, That the Prophets of the Heathen, who pretended to be inſpired, generally wrote their Prophecies and their Hymns to their Gods, in Verſe: We know not but this may be one Reaſon why the Holy Ghoſt thought

thought fit that ſuch as were inſpired by Him ſhould decline that way of Recording their Prophecies or Praiſes.

IV. As the Scriptures preſcribe us the Uſe of Pſalms in the Praiſes of God, ſo they encourage us to offer thoſe Praiſes by way of *Reſponſes*, or *Anſwering*: For this, we have the beſt Examples that can be deſired, even the bleſſed Angels and glorified Saints: So *Iſa.* 6. 3. *And one cried unto another, Holy, Holy Holy is the Lord of Hoſts.* And the Church triumphant through the whole *Revelation* is (I think) conſtantly repreſented praiſing God after this manner. So *Chap* 7. 9. where *The Multitude*, that repreſent the People *cried out with a loud voice* (verſ. 10.) *Salvation to our God, which ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb.* And then, *The Angels* and *Elders*, who repreſent the Clergy, perform their Part, *verſ.* 12. ſaying, *Amen*; *Bleſſing, and Glory, and Wiſdom, and Thankſgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might, be unto our God.*

They are repreſented the ſame way anſwering one another, *Chap.* 19. 1. *I heard a great voice of much People in Heaven, ſaying Alleluia*; this they repeat (*verſ.* 3.) then the *Twenty four Elders* (repreſenting, as before, the Clergy) anſwer (*verſ.* 4.) *Amen, Alleluia.* Then (*verſ.* 5.) *a Voice came out of the Throne ſaying, Praiſe our God.* Upon which (*verſ.* 6.)

6.) the People reſume their part, and anſwer, *Alleluia*: *for the Lord Omnipotent Reigns.* I make no queſtion but this is taken by Alluſion from the manner of the Church's Praiſing God on Earth; and there is nothing in it but what is agreeable to St. *Paul*'s Command of *Teaching and Admoniſhing one another in Pſalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*; which ſuppoſes every one to have ſhare in them, either by turns, or by bearing a part.

It is obſervable, that the Pſalms contain many excellent Inſtructions and Exhortations, as well as Praiſes and Prayers, and therefore St. *Paul* recommends them to Chriſtians for their mutual Inſtruction and Admonition. It was common therefore for one to ſing, and the reſt to hearken for their Inſtruction and Edification, as appears 1 *Cor.* 14. 31. *For ye may all propheſie one by one, that all may learn and be comforted*: *Propheſying* here (as we may find from the 26th. verſe of this Chapter) includes *Pſalms* as well as *Doctrines, Tongues, Revelations and Interpretations*; and the praiſing God *one by one*, or by turns, amounts to praiſing Him by way of Reſponſes or Anſwering; and tho' theſe Prophets were inſpired, yet it is plain they acted in this according to the ſettled Order of the Church, *Verſ.* 33. *As in all the Churches of the Saints*; and theſe inſpired Prophets thus praiſing

ſing God *one by one*, is an unqueſtionable Precedent that God approves this way in his Praiſes.

This Way of praiſing God by Anſwering one another, is the moſt Ancient we find in Scripture. For thus *Miriam* praiſed God, *Exod.* 15. 21. And *Miriam* anſwered them, *Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath Triumphed glorioufly*, &c. And the laſt Song recorded in Scripture is of the ſame ſort, *Rev.* 19. as is before-mentioned.

I reckon the Songs with which the Women of *Iſrael* received *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 18. 7. to be Religious, and there it is expreſly ſaid That *they anſwered one another*: And *Chap.* 21. 11. *Did they not ſing one to another?* &c. But whether theſe Songs were Religious or no, it is certain that the Frame and Compoſition of ſome Pſalms are ſuch, as plainly diſcover that they were deſigned to be ſung in parts; and as much is owned by the beſt Commentators: Such are the 24, and 118. Pſalms.

It is to be obſerved that the Law of *Moſes* neither preſcribes Pſalms in the praiſes of God, nor Singers, nor the way of Singing: Theſe all therefore are parts of Natural Religion, and indeed ancienter than the Law, as appears by *Exod.* 15. What therefore we find in the Old Teſtament concerning theſe, is either

either from the immediate Preſcriptions and Revelations of God by his Prophets, or from the Dictates of Nature, and not any part of the Ceremonial Law. And 'tis obvious that Natural Neceſſity will teach any conſidering Man this way of alternate ſinging or anſwering in parts; for if the Songs be long, as ſome of the Pſalms are, no one Man's Voice can hold out to the end.

V. The Holy Scriptures recommend to us the uſe of Inſtruments in the praiſes of God; the Pſalmiſt frequently uſes and recommends them, and the whole Book of Pſalms is concluded with this Advice, *Pſal.* 150. ver. 3. *Praiſe him with Timbrel, praiſe him with ſtringed Inſtruments and Organs,* &c. Thus Religious Perſons were taught to praiſe God before the *Law. Ex.* 15. 20. *And Miriam the Propheteſs the ſiſter of Aaron, took a Timbrel in her hand, and all the Women went after with the Timbrel,* &c. And thus the Bleſſed in Heaven are repreſented praiſing God. *Rev* 5. 8. and 14 2. The Writers of the New Teſtament recommend to us the *Pſalms* which were the Hymns of the Jewiſh Church, and command us to ſing them, and 'tis obſervable that the word we render *Sing*, Jam 5. 13. originally implies *ſinging with an Inſtrument.* Now if they had not approved the Jewiſh way of ſinging them, which was with Inſtruments,

ſtruments, they would not have uſed a word that imported it; nay it is not to be doubted but they would have cautioned us againſt it; but the uſe of Inſtruments (as I have ſhewed before in the Caſe of *Miriam*) being no part of the Ceremonial Law, but antecedent to it, ought not to ceaſe without ſome Command or Precept condemning it,

VI. Laſtly, The Scripture requires that we underſtand the praiſes we ſing to God; and this warrants our Tranſlating them into the Vulgar Tongue: It is a Duty therefore incumbent on the Governors of the Church, to procure the *Pſalms* to be Tranſlated for the Uſe of the People under their Charge, and they may expect the Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit when they attempt it, in Obedience to his Command. But if through Humane Frailty, any miſtake, not contrary to Faith, ſhould creep in, this ought to be no Exception againſt the Uſe of the Tranſlation, ſince there are ſuch Miſtakes both in the *Syriac*, *Greek* and *Latin* Tranſlations, ſome of which are of great Antiquity, and were uſed by our Saviour himſelf, and his Apoſtles.

Theſe are the Directions the Scriptures give us for the Performance of this firſt part of the Worſhip of God, which conſiſts in praiſes, and the manner we find them offer'd to Him by his Saints.

SECT.

SECT. II.

The manner of Praiſing God Publickly, which is preſcribed and practiſed by our Church.

NOw as to the manner of offering *Praiſes* in our Church, it is to be conſidered,

1. That we are directed to praiſe, glorifie, and confeſs to God every Day, in a certain number of *Pſalms* of his own Appointment, out of the Old Teſtament; and then in ſuch Hymns as are recorded in the New: And to theſe there are added ſuch other Hymns, Confeſſions of Faith and Thankſgivings, as will appear by and by to be agreeable to the general Directions of Scripture.

But inaſmuch as the Myſtery of the Holy Trinity is more explicitly revealed to us under the Goſpel, than it was to thoſe under the Law; Therefore our Church has thought fit to require us with every *Pſalm* and *Hymn* to intermix, *Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt*; *As it was in the Beginning, is now, and ever ſhall be*: To ſignifie that we believe, that the ſame *God* was worſhiped by them as by us, the ſame *God* that is *glori-*

fied

fied in the *Pſalms*, having been from the beginning *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, as well as now: So that our aſcribing this Glory expreſly to the Three Perſons in whoſe Name we are Baptized, ought not to be taxed as any real Addition to the *Pſalms*, it being only uſed as a neceſſary Expedient to turn the *Jewiſh Pſalms* into *Chriſtian Hymns*, and to fit them for the Uſe of the Church now, as they were before for the Uſe of the Synagogue; which practiſe I preſume can give cauſe of Exception to none but *Socinians*.

2. Our Church Orders theſe Pſalms to be either *Sung* or *Said*, as the People are able to offer them; not being willing to lay a greater reſtraint on them than the Scripture has done: In which (as I have already ſhewed) we have Examples for both theſe ways of praiſing *God*.

3. They are propoſed to us in Proſe, without any other alteration from the Original than what was neceſſary to make them intelligible in our Language.

4. The People are allowed to bear their part in them, and either to ſing or ſay them by way of Anſwering: This is according to the Scripture Examples, but it is not impoſed, except in very few Caſes.

5. Our Church permitteth the Uſe of ſome grave Muſical Inſtruments to regulate the

the Voices of thoſe that ſing, and to ſtir up their Affections, which are the Natural Effects of Muſick, and ſeem more requiſite in Northern Countreys, where generally People's Voices are more harſh and untuneable than in other places; but this is not impoſed in any Congregation, nor doth any Rule of our Church require it, and therefore it is at the People's Choice, whether they will uſe the help of theſe Inſtruments or no.

6. This then is the care our Church has taken, for the publick performance of the praiſes of God, and if we bring grace in our hearts, and an inward ſenſe of the Majeſty of God, and of his Mercies towards us, when we come to joyn in them, which is our part and duty to do, who can ſay that God's praiſes thus celebrated, are not according to his Commands, and acceptable to him? I think it ſufficiently plain, that they are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, which ought to be our Rule for this, and all other parts of God's Worſhip.

I think no more neceſſary therefore on this Head, but with all earneſtneſs, to beſeech you who are of our Communion, to conſider how great and important a part theſe praiſes are of the Worſhip of God, and to apply our ſelves with all diligence and holy zeal to the performance of it; for we

never come nearer the Imployment of the Bleſſed, than when our Hearts and Mouths are filled with the praiſes of our God.

SECT. III.

The Diſſenters manner of Praiſing God in Publick.

AND now as to you my Friends and Brethren, who diſſent from this Worſhip of ours, give me leave with all calmneſs to examine how you perform this great Work of Praiſing God; and I deſire you to compare your own practice in your publick Aſſemblies, with what you find in your Bibles concerning this Duty.

1. Your Directory determines it to be *the duty of Chriſtians to praiſe God publickly, by ſinging of Pſalms together in the Congregation,* and that *in ſinging Pſalms the voice is to be tuneable and gravely ordered,* and laſtly, that *it is convenient that the Miniſter, or ſome other fit Perſon appointed by him and the other ruling Officers, do read the Pſalm, line by line, before the ſinging thereof*; and your common practice is to ſing two or three Verſes of a Pſalm in Meetre, the Miniſter, or Clerk, firſt reading each line, and the People ſinging it after.

2. Before I proceed to make any Obſervations on theſe Rules and Practice, to

prevent Miſtakes, I deſire you to obſerve,

1. That I do not condemn the ſinging of Pſalms in Meetre as unlawful.

2. That I take it for granted, That the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians did praiſe God in Proſe, and that Meetre and Rhyme are, for ought appears, purely of Humane Invention.

3. We muſt conſider that if we take the Pſalms (as *We* uſe them) in Proſe, there is not a more exalted Piece of Poetry in the World, nor any thing better fitted to raiſe in ſerious and well-diſpoſed People, the moſt devout Affections. Whereas, if we take them as they are commonly uſed in Rhyme, the Force, the Vigour, the Loftineſs which are ſo Extraordinary in the Proſe Tranſlation, are almoſt entirely loſt in the Verſe, and tho' ſeveral have attempted to Tranſlate them into Engliſh Verſe, yet I cannot find that any one has done Juſtice to the Majeſty of the Expreſſions, and hardly to the Senſe of them.

III. Having premiſed theſe things, I intreat you to conſider impartially with me, how far this your Practice agrees with the Scripture Rule.

1. Then the Scriptures command us to praiſe God in Pſalms, and undoubtedly the firſt Chriſtians uſed whole Pſalms at a time.

Sometimes they joined together in ſinging them, as our Saviour and his Diſciples did *Matt.* xxvi. 30. Sometimes one only ſung, and the reſt attended for their Edification, as appears from 1 *Cor.* xiv. 26. But the aforeſaid Method of ſinging the Meetre Pſalms takes up ſo much time, that it is impoſſible to praiſe God in whole Pſalms after that manner. But if we uſe the Pſalms in Proſe according to the Order of our Church, the Experience of Good Men doth teſtifie that we may eaſily paſs through them in a Month, with ſerioufneſs and attention, whether we ſing or read them. And to well-diſpoſed Minds no part of God's Service is more agreeable or edifying: whereas ſome Years would not ſerve to that purpoſe, if we ſhould uſe the new-invented way of ſinging a few Verſes. And I queſtion whether all of them were ever yet ſung through in one Meeting-place, perhaps not in all the Meetings of the Kingdom, and yet it muſt be confeſſed that every one of them was left to the Church by the Holy Ghoſt for that uſe, and is profitable, when thus uſed, for Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, Inſtruction and Comfort. Which plainly proves, that the ſinging the Pſalms in Meetre, is not the Scripture Way of uſing them.

2. Let

2. Let me mind you, that in the time of the late Uſurpation, Dr. *Manton*, a Man of conſiderable Reputation among the Diſſenters, obſerves in his Comment on the Epiſtle of St. *James*, *Chap.* v. *Verſ.* 13. That ſeveral ſcrupled ſinging Pſalms at all; others objected againſt ſinging them in Verſe; this he calleth *a vain Cavil*, yet propoſeth, *if the ſcruple continueth*, that *ſuch may ſing the Reading Pſalms, as hath been uſed in Cathedrals*, and vouches St. *Auſtin* and *Athanaſius* for it; which is a plain Confeſſion from this conſiderable Perſon, that this way of ſinging is leſs liable to Exception, than yours.

3. I know it is alledged, that we ought to have the Pſalms in Verſe for ſinging, as well as we ought to have them in Proſe for Reading. But I have ſhewed already, that Chriſt and his Diſciples ſung their Hymns in Proſe; and I deſire you to conſider whether it be neceſſary to vary from theſe Precedents. We have a Command to Tranſlate them (which ſuppoſes into Proſe, becauſe the Original is ſo) but none to turn them into Meetre, which neceſſarily requires Paraphraſing, changing the Order of the Sentences, ſometimes adding and leaving out Words; and on that account ſeems to give Humane Wit too great a Liberty of treating the Word of God as Men pleaſe: At leaſt, we muſt acknow-

ledge that the Pſalms ſo ordered, partake of Humane Frailty, and are hardly equal to the beſt meer Humane Compoſures. When therefore we uſe ſuch Pſalms, we ought to uſe them as Humane Compoſures only, and not as God's Word: And thus they are uſed by our People in our Aſſemblies, not as any main ſubſtantial part of the Worſhip of God, but rather as a voluntary entertainment of Devotion, and a refreſhment to the People between the parts of the Service; much leſs are they allowed by us to juſtle out the Pſalms and Hymns appointed by God.

4. As to the manner of ſinging the Pſalms in Meetre, at preſent in uſe, both with you and us in ſome Places, that is, the Miniſter or Clerk's reading a line, and the People ſinging it after, is a great interruption to the Muſick, and to the underſtanding of the Pſalm, by breaking the ſence of it, and in that reſpect very inconvenient, and is likewiſe a late Invention of our own, never uſed by any Foreign Church, either Popiſh or Reformed, for ought I can find, to this day; and has been taken up to ſupply the negligence and lazineſs of People, who will not now, as formerly, be at pains to get Pſalms by heart, or ſo much as procure Books, or learn to read them.

5. Notwithſtanding your Directory requires

quires the voice in ſinging Pſalms *to be tuneably and gravely ordered*, yet you have not only refuſed the Uſe of Inſtruments, (which are a natural means to help the Voice, and make it tuneable, and are uſed by moſt of the Reformed Churches in *Europe*.) but have alſo determined it be Unlawful.

I would intreat you to conſider, that though perhaps it may not be ſo proper to preſs the Uſe of Inſtrument in the ſervice of *God*, in theſe Parts, where ſo many, for want of being uſed to them, have entertained Prejudices againſt them, and ſome are uncapable of being affected by them, yet the making them unlawful, is againſt Nature and Scripture, and is on that account a dangerous Superſtition, and Encroachment on Chriſtian Liberty.

6. The ſame Superſtition and Encroachment it is, not only to forbear to praiſe *God* in ſinging or ſaying Pſalms and Hymns by way of *Reſponſes* or *Anſwering*, (of which I have given ſuch Noble Precedents out of Scripture) but even to determine it to be Unlawful.

Laſtly, I would entreat you to conſider, That foraſmuch as appears, you have altogether laid aſide the Pſalms in Proſe, and the other Scripture Hymns, that are of *God*'s *immediate Appointment*, and for the Uſe of

which we have the Example of our *Saviour* and his *Saints*, inſomuch that they are no where uſed by you in the Praiſes of *God*; but in their ſtead you have ſubſtituted, as is before obſerved, a few Verſes of a Pſalm of *Humane Compoſure*, without Scripture-Example or Precedent, and ſing them in a way that has nothing of ancient Practice, much leſs Scripture, for it, but is purely and immediately an *Invention of Men.*

IV. The Caſe then between our Church and you, in this Point, I think impartially ſtands thus: Our Church praiſes *God* every Day with five or ſix Pſalms, beſides other Hymns, of *His Own Appointment*, and in *His Own Words* and *Method*, and yet is deſerted and condemned by you in this very Point, as *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; whereas you, who only praiſe Him in a piece of a Pſalm of a few Verſes, and in a *Method of your own finding out*, perſwade your ſelves that you keep the Ordinances of *God* pure and unmixed from *Humane Invention.*

This is a thing ſeriouſly to be conſidered by you; for as it is eaſie to think what all unprejudiced Men will judge of it now, ſo we may conclude what *God* will judge of it at the laſt Day. If you in earneſt lay theſe things to heart, and reflect on them, I perſuade my

my ſelf that they will at leaſt prevail with you to be modeſt in your Cenſures of us your Brethren; and prevent your Judging, much leſs Condemning us, or our manner of Praiſing God, as Unacceptable to Him.

CHAP. II.

Of Prayer.

SECT. I.

What the Holy Scriptures preſcribe concerning it.

I. LET us now proceed to the *Second* Main Part of the *Worſhip of God*, in the Publick Meetings of Chriſtians; which I obſerved was *Prayer*, or *Supplication*.

And if we conſider what Rules, Directions and Examples the Scriptures afford us, for the Performance of this Duty, we ſhall find,

That they direct us to offer up our Prayers in a Set and Prepared Form *of Words*. That we may more clearly judge of this Matter, it will be fit to conſider the ſeveral Parts of *Prayer* diſtinctly by themſelves; ſuch as *Confeſſion*, *Supplication*, *Interceſſion*, &c.

1. *Con-*

1. *Confeſſion* of our own Unworthineſs, and of God's Mercy, to aggravate it, is commonly looked on as the firſt Part of *Prayer*, and proper to introduce our *Supplications*. Now, in ſearching the Scriptures, we ſhall find expreſs Command to uſe a Set Form of Words in both theſe ſorts of *Confeſſion*. So *Deut.* 26. 3. *Thou ſhalt go unto the Prieſt that ſhall be in thoſe days, and ſay unto him, I profeſs this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country, which the Lord ſware unto our fore-fathers to give us.* And then the Offerer was to make his Confeſſion, *ver.* 5. *And thou ſhalt ſpeak and ſay before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to periſh was my father.* &c. Here we have a *Form* of *Confeſſion* of the Perſon's *Unworthineſs*, and of God's *Goodneſs* and *Mercy*; together with a *Profeſſion* of *Obedience*, and Dependance on Him prefcribed by God Himſelf in Set and Prepared Words.

The ſame appears from *Solomon*'s preſcribing a Form of *Confeſſion* for the penitent *Iſraelites*, 1 *Kings.* 8. 47. Which Words we find accordingly applied in *Pſal.* 106. 6. and made part of a larger Form of *Confeſſion*, to be uſed in their Captivity, (as *Solomon* deſigned them;) which appears from the 47th. Verſe of the ſame *Pſalm*, (taken from the Form preſcribed by *David*, 1 *Chron.* 16. 35.) And *Daniel*, in his *Form* of *Confeſſion*

feſſion in Captivity, *chap.* 9. 5. uſes the ſame *Form* of Words. From whence it appears, that they were not left arbitrarily to Choice or Diſcretion, though other Words might be joyned with them, when there was Occaſion to Enlarge or Vary the Form.

Many of the *Pſalms* are Forms of *Confeſſion*, and were uſed and daily repeated by the Jewiſh Church. *Pſal.* 51. was the Form of *Confeſſion David* prepar'd and us'd, for his Murther and Adultery: And he not only uſed it himſelf, but directed it to the Maſter of his Choire, to be uſed in the Publick Service, as appears from the Title of it. *Pſal.* 78. is a general *Confeſſion* for the whole People, ſetting forth at large the Mercies of God to them; and their Ingratitude, Diſobedience and Rebellion: and this not as a Pattern, but as a Set and Prepared Form, to be uſed in their Publick Service. All which ſhew us that Addreſſes to God in ſuch Forms, are of Divine Inſtitution; and are a Warrant to us, that he approves that our *Confeſſion* ſhould be made to him in that manner.

2. The Second Part of Prayer is *Supplication* for good Things: And in this Caſe we have likewiſe the Commandment of God for a Form of Words, *Deut.* 26. 13, 15. *Then thou ſhalt ſay before the Lord thy God, Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bleſs thy*

thy people Iſrael, and the land which thou haſt given us, as thou ſwareſt unto our fathers, &c. So *Hoſ.* 14. 2. *Take with you words, and turn to the Lord your God, and ſay unto him, Take away all iniquity,* &c. *Moſes* in the Wilderneſs uſed a Set Form of Words to this purpoſe, and recommended it to be uſed by the Church of God for ever; as is manifeſt from *Pſal.* 90. which has this Title, *A Prayer of Moſes, the Man of God.* When ſuch a Perſon by the Inſpiration of the *Holy Ghoſt*, uſed, and left to be uſed by us in our *Supplications*, ſuch a Set and Prepared Form of Words, we ought not to doubt but that manner of Addreſs is acceptable to God.

3. The Third Part of Prayer, is *Interceſſion* in the behalf of others. Now, Bleſſing is an eminent ſort of *Interceſſion*; and for the Uſe of a Set Form of Words in this, we have likewiſe the Command of God, *Numb.* 6. 23. *On this wiſe ye ſhall bleſs the children of Iſrael, ſaying unto them, The Lord bleſs thee, and keep thee,* &c. Here we have not only a Bleſſing, but an earneſt *Interceſſion* with God for his People, and the *Form* and *Words* preſcribed by Himſelf, which were not to be uſed by mean, *ignorant People,* (who are only now ſuppoſed, *by ſome,* to need the help of *Forms*,) but by *Aaron*, and his *Sons* the Chief Prieſts. From which we may be aſſured,

That

That *God* approves that manner of Addreſs in our *Bleſſings* and *Interceſſions* for one another, not only from *mean* People, but from the *greateſt*.

4. The Fourth Part of Prayer conſiſteth in *Petitions* for averting Evil, commonly called *Deprecation*. And for this purpoſe, we have ſeveral Forms preſcribed by God, *Joel.* 1. 14. *Gather the elders, and all the inhabitants of the land, into the houſe of the Lord your God, and ſay unto the Lord, Alas, for the day, the day of the Lord is at hand*, &c. We have God's Commandment for another Form, *Joel.* 2. 17. *Let the prieſts, the miniſters of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them ſay, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach*, &c. From whence it clearly follows, that God approves the Uſe of a Form in this Part of Prayers though commonly the moſt earneſt and importunate, and ſuch as ſeems leaſt to admit of being bounded by a Form; ſo that we have the Approbation and Commandment of God for the Uſe of a Set Form of Words, in all the Parts of Prayer.

II. And accordingly we find holy Men of God, though full of Wiſdom, and of his Spirit, uſing the ſame Set Form of Prayer always on the ſame Occaſion. Thus the Scriptures inform us concerning *Moſes*

Numb.

Numb. 10. 35. *When the ark ſet forward,* Moſes *ſaid, Riſe up, Lord, and let thine enemies be ſcattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before thee: And when it reſted, he ſaid, Return, O Lord, unto the many thouſands of Iſrael.* From whence it appears, that God approves the Uſe of one Set, Conſtant *Form* of Words in our Prayers, as long as the Occaſion of repeating them is the ſame: For, I preſume, none will ſuſpect it was for want of Words, or of the *Spirit of Prayer,* that *Moſes* confined himſelf to this *Form.*

I ſhall add further, That the whole Book of *Pſalms* is a Collection of Prayers of all ſorts; and there are few of them but what are moſt Excellent *Forms* of Prayer, expreſſed in ſuch pathetick, ſignificant and moving Words, that we have great reaſon to thank God for furniſhing us with them, and which we can never hope to equal by any of our own Invention, ſuch are the 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, *&c.* On this account they were uſed by the Jews, as the conſtant Service and Liturgy performed in their Temple, as we may gather from what I formerly quoted, 2 *Chron.* 29. 30.

III. But perhaps ſome may think theſe Commands and Examples of Set *Forms* of Prayer, not to be a ſufficient Warrant to Chriſtians; becauſe they are taken out of the

Old

Old Teſtament, before the Spirit was poured out in ſo plentiful a meaſure, as under the Goſpel. I ſhall therefore proceed to examine the Commands and Examples of the *New* Teſtament. And here,

1. I think it is certain, that our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles* Prayed by a *Form*; for they joined in the Worſhip of the Temple and Synagogues, which conſiſted in *Pſalms*, as I have already ſhewn, and in ſome certain Forms of *Prayers* added to them, and conſtantly uſed in their daily Service, as we learn from thoſe that give an Account of the Jewiſh Worſhip at that time. Now our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles* being frequently preſent at their Service, both in the Temple and Synagogues, 'tis manifeſt they approved the manner of Addreſſing themſelves to *God* in a Set *Form* of *Words*.

* Much to this purpoſe might be urged out of the Rabbins; but the Author thinks it fit to confine himſelf to Scripture.

2. But our *Saviour* has put this Matter out of all diſpute with impartial Men, by preſcribing a *Form* to his Diſciples, when they deſired him *to teach them to pray as John taught his Diſciples*. For we find his way of Teaching them, was not by directing them to wait for the Impulſes of the Spirit, and immediate *Inſpiration* from God, of what they were

were to offer up to Him: We do not find him saying, *When ye Pray; speak what shall then come into your Minds, or what shall be given you in that hour,* without taking *thought about what they should say*; as He did in another Case, that is, when they should be *brought before Governours and Kings for his sake, Mat.* 10. 19. But in addressing themselves to God, he prescribed them a *Form of Words,* and Commanded them to use it *Luke* 11. 2. *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven,* &c. Here is an express Command of Christ to his Disciples, to use these *Words* when they Pray, *Our Father,* &c. A Command for the Use of a *Form,* so plain, that it is impossible to express it in clearer Terms.

'Tis not to be doubted but Religious Persons among the Jews offer'd up constantly Prayers to God. We see it in *David, Psal.* 55. 17. and in *Daniel, chap.* 6. 10. And no doubt the Disciples of our Saviour were not wanting in this Duty, nor in Skill to perform it, since we find that other devout Persons of their time had their Hours of Prayer, as we see in *Acts* 3. 1. Therefore, what they desired of our *Saviour,* was not to teach them absolutely, or in general, to Pray, but to teach them to Pray, *as John also taught his Disciples*; that is, to give them a *Form* of

of *Prayer* proper to his *Inſtitution*, as they ſaw the Diſciples of *Moſes* and *John* had proper to theirs. Upon which our *Saviour* gave them the *Lord's-Prayer*, as a Summary of the main Points of his *Doctrine*, and as a conſtant Badge of their being his Diſciples. As if he ſhould have ſaid, *Whenever you offer up to God your uſual Prayers, which religious Cuſtom has taught you, as Jews, and Diſciples of* Moſes, *or of* John, *whether in Secret or Publick; add this always to your other Prayers, for a continual Remembrance to you, of thoſe Duties, Privileges and Qualifications which belong to you, as My Diſciples; and as a Means of obtaining Grace from your Heavenly Father, to enable you to perſevere in them.* The *Lord's-Prayer* is therefore a Badge of Our Profeſſion, impoſed by Chriſt Himſelf, and to be uſed by Us, as we would be accounted His Diſciples.

Neither will ſaying the Subſtance of it in other *Words* of our own *Invention*, anſwer the Intent of this Command: Since,

1. We are ſure the Subſtance of the Prayer is put by Chriſt in the moſt appoſite and comprehenſive *Words* that are poſſible; and therefore wholly to lay them aſide for others, is plainly to decline the Choice of Words that Chriſt has made for us, and ſubſtitute leſs appoſite of our own, to expreſs thoſe Petitions in.

2. The more particularly any thing is Commanded in the Worſhip of God, we ought to be the more careful to obſerve it; and may be the more confident, that God is pleaſed with our Performance of it. Since therefore we are particularly Commanded, when we Pray, to ſay, *Our Father*, &c. whatever other Prayers we offer to God, this ought not to be omitted.

3. In general, we are Commanded to offer up our Deſires to *God*; and in particular, to offer this Prayer. Theſe Commands agree very well together, and therefore the one ought not to juſtle out the other. To lay aſide the Prayer particularly Commanded by Chriſt, for others of our own compoſing in purſuance of the general Command, is too apparently to prefer our own *Invention* to God's *Command.*

4. When we take the liberty to word our own Prayers, we may forget ſome things; we may mix our own Frailties and Weakneſs in our Petitions; and this too often appears both in the Matter and Wording of them. The Way therefore to Supply theſe Defects, and to obtain Pardon for our Infirmities, is, to uſe our Lord's perfect Prayer, not only as a *Pattern* for Prayer, *(as ſome would have it,)* but likewiſe as a *Form* neceſſary to be uſed, to correct what may be amiſs or defective in our own Prayers.

5. They who lay aſide the Words of the *Lord's-Prayer*, are in danger to lay aſide ſome of the Subſtance of it alſo; particularly the Subſtance of that Petition, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*: For many who lay aſide the *Lord's Prayer*, do neither in Terms nor Subſtance offer this Petition to God; nay, are ſo far from making this the *Condition* of their Pardon, as Chriſt has taught us, that they publickly diſpute againſt the *Form* for this very reaſon; Tho' Chriſt, who foreſaw the *Objection* which our *Corruptions* would be apt to make, has Anſwered it, and bound it upon us indiſpenſibly as our Duty, to ask Forgiveneſs on theſe and no other Terms, *Mat.* 6. 15. And indeed, if ſuch a Sentence had been preſcrib'd by our *Lord*, to be only repeated by Chriſtians once, or oftener, every Day, it would have ſeemed but what was neceſſary to mind them of that peculiar and indiſpenſible Duty of their *Profeſſion*. We ſee the Wiſdom of the Ancients thought fit to reduce their *Doctrine* or *Inſtructions* into *Proverbs*, or *ſhort Sentences* to be got by heart, and kept continually in memory, as of great influence for guiding Mens Lives and Actions; and ſuch Sentences muſt be of much greater influence, when repeated in the preſence of *God*, as theſe in our *Lord's Prayer* are required to be.

Laſtly, This Prayer being given us as a Badge of our *Profeſſion*, a Summary of our Duty as *Chriſtians*, and *a Form of ſound Words*, it is no more lawful to alter it, than to lay it aſide; and it would be the ſame preſumption and hazard to ſubſtitute other Words inſtead of Chriſt's, in this Prayer which we are oblig'd always to uſe when we pray, as to change the Words of our Creed; or as it would be in a Battel to change the *Word* given by a General, or any part of it, and to retain only the ſignification of it. From all which 'tis manifeſt that God has required *Forms of Prayer* to be uſed by us, both in the Old and New Teſtament.

As to the difference we find in the *Lord's Prayer* as delivered by St *Matthew* and St *Luke*, 'tis to be obſerved that our *Saviour* ſpake in the *Syriack*, or vulgar *Hebrew*, and the Evangeliſts writ their *Goſpels* in *Greek*: Now in the *Syriack*, one and the ſame word expreſſes both thoſe different words which the Evangeliſts uſe in the ſame Petition, as *Debts* and *Treſpaſſes*, *&c.* So that it is no *real* but a *ſeeming* difference between them; all the different Words being the ſame in the Original Langnage in which our *Saviour* ſpake.

IV. As we have the *Command* of *God*, and the *Example* of his *Saints*, for offering up our Prayers to Him, in a ſet and prepared *Form of Words*, ſo we have the like Example for

joyning

joyning Voices, upon *occaſion*. in offering theſe *Words*. Generally it is ſufficient that the *People* join in their Hearts with the words of publick Prayers, yet the Scriptures warrant alſo, *on ſome Occaſions*, their joining their Voices.

1. Thus we find the People of *Iſrael* addreſſing themſelves to God, *Judges* 21 2. *And the people came to the Houſe of God, and abode there till even, before God; and lift up their Voices, and wept ſore, and ſaid, O Lord God of Iſrael, why is this come to paſs in Iſrael*, &c.

2. In Hymns and Pſalms (which are alſo Prayers in great part, as I noted before) the People are generally allowed by all (as being fully warranted by Scripture) to join their Voices So *Moſes* and the Children of *Iſrael* ſung unto the Lord, *Exod.* 15. 1.

3. In the New Teſtament we have an Eminent Example of this practice, *Acts* iv. 24. where the Apoſtles and their Diſciples *lift up their Voice to God with one accord, and ſaid, Lord thou art God*, &c. If this Prayer was immediately inſpired, as it ſeems it was, then the whole Aſſembly was inſpired together, not only to think the ſame *Thing*, but likewiſe to utter the ſame *Words*; and the Spirit of God by it has atteſted the fitneſs and decency of a whole Congregation's pronouncing the ſame Prayer together. If it had not been convenient that this ſhould be

ſometimes practiſed in our Chriſtian Aſſemblies, God would not have given us this Example. If the People were always to join in their Hearts only with our publick Prayers, it would have been ſo here, for the Spirit of *God* wou'd not have led them to do an indecent thing, or a thing unfit for *God's Worſhip.*

4. St. *Paul* and *Silas* joined alſo their *Voices* in their Prayers, as we may ſee from *Acts* xvi. 25. *And at midnight* Paul *and* Silas *prayed, and ſung Praiſes unto God, and the Priſoners heard them*: I know it may be alledged, That they ſung their Prayers which they offered up to *God* on this *Occaſion*, and on that account *joined their Voices*. I confeſs the Original favours this Inference; but if it be allowed that the *Apoſtles ſung* their Prayers together, it muſt be allowed that they might likewiſe *ſay* them together: For we find the Bleſſed in Heaven offering not only their *Praiſes* together, but their *Prayers* alſo; ſo *Rev.* vi. 10 *They cryed with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, Holy and True, doſt thou not Judge and Avenge our Blood*, &c. From all which it is manifeſt, that we are warranted by the Examples of *God's People*, both in the Old and New Teſtament, to join our Voices, as well as our Hearts, in ſome of our publick Supplications to God; and that this practice is no New Invention of Men.

V. If

V. If we conſult the Scripture, we ſhall find that it is the Prieſt's part to make publick Interceſſion for the People, but yet ſo, that the People ought to bear a part by themſelves, and anſwer in the Service, which we commonly call *Reſponſes.*

1. They are commanded to do it, *Pſal.* 106. 48. where after the Prayers and Praiſes of which the Pſalm conſiſts, are ended, it is added, *Let all the People ſay, Amen, Praiſe the Lord*; and accordingly we find 1 *Chron.* 16. 36. that *the People ſaid Amen, and praiſed the Lord.* And this is more ſignally obſervable in that Solemn Service at the Dedication of *Solomon*'s Temple, where we find firſt the Prieſts and Levites praiſing God, 2 *Chron.* v. 13. And ſaying, *For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever*, the uſual *Form* of Praiſing ſo often repeated in the Pſalms, particularly in the 136. which was probably uſed at that time. Then *Solomon* who built the Temple, performed another part of the Service, *Chap.* 6. 3 He bleſſed, Firſt the People; Secondly, He bleſſed and thanked *God* for his Mercy. And Laſtly, offer'd that Divine Prayer of Dedication, which we find in that Chapter: Then follow the burnt Offerings and Sacrifices, which were peculiarly the Prieſt's ſhare of the Service, *Chap.* 7. And *God* gives his Approbation of their Praiſes, Prayers and Offerings, by ſending

down Fire from Heaven to consume their Sacrifices: And then last of all follows the People's part which they perform, *Chap.* 7. 3. *They bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, He is good, for his Mercy endureth for ever.* This Service was Ordered by the Spirit of *God*, and plainly shews us, that He approved of the People's having a share or part peculiar to themselves in his Worship.

2. If it be said that this was the way of Worshipping *God* under the Law, which is now Abolished and Unlawful, as well as the other Levitical Ceremonies: The *Apostles* have answer'd this, by continuing this practice in the Christian Church, and by admitting the People to bear a part in the publick Service, and to answer to the Prayers, have assured us that this is no Legal Abolished Ceremony. This is manifest from 1 *Cor.* 14. 16. *Else when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks?* which shews that even the unlearned had a part assigned them in the Christian Assemblies. It may be added to this, what I observed before, (*Chap.* 1. *Sect.* 1. *N.* 4.) of the *Responses* in praising *God*, and of the Worship described in the *Revelations*, where the Angels and Elders representing the Clergy, and the Multitude

titude representing the People, hear each of them their distinct Parts; in allusion to what was done in the Christian Assemblies. And this is a clear proof, that the People bore a part, and answered to the Blessings and Prayers of him that Officiated, ever since the Christian Worship was Established.

SECT. II.

The Rules and Practice of Our Church, concerning Prayer.

HAving thus seen the Directions and Examples which the Scriptures afford us for the publick Performance of our Prayers to God, let us now consider the Worship of our Church, and compare it with Them; both as to the Words and Matter of Our Prayers; and to the comfort of us, who are of this Communion, it will clearly appear,

1. That there is not one thing we ask of *God* in them, which he has not particularly directed us to ask, or any thing for which we ought to pray, that is omitted. This advantage we have towards the Proof of this Point, that our Prayers are fixed and stated, and may be examined by all that have a mind to be satisfy'd in them. An Advantage we gain by putting them into a set and prepared

Form

Form of Words, according to the Commands of *God,* and the Examples of Holy Men; whereas 'tis impoſſible for ſuch as uſe only *ex tempore* Prayer, thus to juſtify their Service, becauſe their Prayers are altogether uncertain, and depend on the preſent thoughts of the Speaker.

2. Our Church requires the People to join their Voices with the Miniſter in ſome of the Prayers, in which they are more particularly concerned, and which ſeem of the moſt general and greateſt moment. Such are the general Confeſſions of Sin, and the Lord's Prayer.

3. Our Church has aſſigned for the People ſome ſhort Anſwers or Reſponſes to our Prayers, whereby they may be ſtirred up to attention, and ſignifie their concurrence with the Miniſter. Thus to every Prayer and Bleſſing they are obliged to anſwer *Amen,* as we find the People did in the Church of *Corinth*; and to join Unanimouſly in ſome other ſhort Ejaculations to implore God's Mercy, or beſeech him to hear us. In all which I have already ſhewed we have the warrant of Scripture; and it is plain to any one that will be at the pains to conſider our Service, that we have taken the Rules thereof from Scripture, and have not invented a Service out of our own Heads; and then (as is too often the Cuſtom of *Innovators*) endeavoured

deavoured to make the Scripture comply with it. The firſt *Reformers* of Our Church would never have retain'd and prepared *Forms* of Prayers, had they not found ſuch in Scripture: they would never have required the People to join their voices in ſome Prayers, and anſwer to others, if the Examples of Scripture had not lead them to it. They profeſſed, and their Deſign was to make the Word of *God* their Rule; and we ſee how exactly they conformed to it in theſe particulars. I wiſh I could ſay as much for all other ways of Worſhip among Proteſtants.

SECT. III.

The Practice of thoſe who differ from Us.

I. AND here I muſt intreat you of my Dioceſs, who Diſſent from Our Worſhip, ſeriouſly to conſider with me, what it is which you have ſubſtituted in the place of theſe things which you have intirely laid aſide, tho' ſo expreſly directed and warranted by Scripture; and examine whether your way have a ſolid Foundation in *God's Word*. I ſhall endeavour to repreſent it with all fairneſs and impartiality, and leave you to judge as God ſhall direct you, and as you will anſwer it at the laſt day.

And

And here I find that ſome of your *Writers* are of Opinion, *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God in ſome meaſure, for enabling their Hearts to conceive, and their Tongues to expreſs convenient deſires to God*; and that therefore *Forms of Prayer* are of no neceſſary uſe, either in *Publick* or *Private*; on the contrary, that they ſtint the Spirit, and hinder Men from ſtirring up or uſing the gift that *God* has given them.

2. Others of you go further, and affirm that all *Forms of Prayer* are unlawful to Chriſtians, and that therefore it is a Sin to join in a Worſhip where they are uſed, or to be preſent at it.

3. That the Miniſter is the Mouth of the Congregation, and that he only is to ſpeak publickly to *God* in the behalf of the People, and that they are not to join their Voices, but their Hearts only with him.

Upon theſe Principles you forſake our Worſhip, and many of you think it is a ſin to be ſo much as preſent at our Religious Aſſemblies: It is of great importance therefore that you ſhould underſtand what the Scriptures determine in this matter; for if our Worſhip (which you thus forſake) be *plainly* enjoined by Scripture (as I think I have made it ſufficiently appear;) and theſe Principles of *Your Worſhip*, and *Your Practice* purſuant to them, have no *Foundation* in Scripture; I cannot

cannot ſee how *You* can anſwer *your* forſaking Our Aſſemblies, to *God* and *your* own Conſciences. Let us then conſider each of theſe Principles apart.

II. And firſt, for that Poſition of your *Directory*, *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God in ſome meaſure, for enabling their Hearts to conceive, and their Tongues to expreſs convenient Deſires to God*; I intreat you to conſider what *Promiſe* or *Foundation* it has in Scripture. I profeſs to you ſeriouſly, That upon the ſtricteſt *Enquiry* I could make, I never could find any ſuch Promiſe *made to all the Children of God*, in the Old or New Teſtaments, neither did I ever meet any Diſſenter that was able to ſhew any ſuch Promiſe to furniſh us with Words in Prayer, without the uſe of ſet and premeditated Forms. If then there be *none* ſuch, as we may be well aſſured there is not, was it not too much preſumption in the Compilers of *your Directory*, to obtrude this Doctrine on the World, or perſwade People to depend on it, and neglect the help of *Forms*, which the Scripture preſcribes, and recommends to us? Nay, as there is no Promiſe for ſuch extraordinary Aſſiſtance *to all the Children of God to conceive Prayer*, ſo neither is there any Command in Scripture, requiring us to *worſhip* or *pray* to God in a conceiv'd, extemporary, or unpremeditated *Prayer*, or ſo much as an

Example

Example in a ſettled ordinary Congregation where it was practiſed. If then you can ſhew none of theſe in the *holy Scriptures*, neither *Promiſe* nor *Command*, 'tis a plain caſe, that this *Doctrine* is a meer *Invention of Men*, and the *Worſhip* built on it a *Vanity*, in the ſence of our *Saviour*, *Mark* 7. 7. If my deſign were only to confute an *Adverſary*, what I have already ſaid were ſufficient; but this *Spirit of Prayer* is a point of ſuch Conſequence, that I hope it will be both grateful and inſtructive to the Readers of all ſorts, to explain it to them, and ſet it in as clear a light as I can; which I ſhall do under the following Heads

III. 1. Firſt therefore I doubt not but it will be granted, That whoever *prayeth* to God with *Faith*, *Sincerity*, *Fervency*, *Love*, *Humility*, *Conformity to God's Will*, *Underſtanding*, *and Decency of Expreſſion*, prays *Acceptably* to Him, and is endowed with the *Spirit of Prayer*; and whoever prays without theſe, does want it.

2. I ſuppoſe no Man of himſelf can attain theſe Graces that are requiſite to make our Prayers Acceptable, and that therefore we muſt have the Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit to beget them in us.

3. I ſuppoſe that it is poſſible for a Man to acquire, by natural means, an Ability to expreſs himſelf decently in Prayer; tho' he cannot

cannot ſo acquire Faith, or any other inward Grace; ſo that *Decency of Expreſſion* is the loweſt part of the Gift of Prayer, and not always a part of it.

4. I ſay that one Praying by a *Form* may have all theſe Qualifications, and therefore his Prayer may be acceptable to God, and proceed from his Spirit.

This may be proved to the Diſſenters, 1. From the *Aſſemblies Larger Catechiſm*, which acknowledges it: For when the Queſtion is put, *How is the Lord's Prayer to be uſed?* The Anſwer is, *The Lord's Prayer is not only for Direction, as a Pattern according to which we are to make other Prayers, but may be alſo uſed as a Prayer, ſo that it be done with Underſtanding, Faith, Reverence, and other Graces, neceſſary to the right Performance of the Duty of Prayer.* 2. Many of the Pſalms are (as I obſerved before) *Forms of Prayer*, and the Diſſenters make no ſcruple to turn theſe *Forms of Prayers* into Meetre, and then ſing them Line by Line after the Miniſter. As for Example: The firſt Verſe of the fifth Pſalm, runs thus, in the Tranſlation they uſe,

Give ear unto my words, O Lord,
my meditations weigh;
Hear my loud cry, my King, my God;
For I to thee will pray.

This

This is as much a *Form of Prayer*, as any in the *Liturgy*, and by their using it as they *do*, they plainly practise *Praying by a Form*: And do further also allow, That *Prayers*, as well as *Praises*, may be offered to *God* with *singing*, and that they may *repeat* their *Forms of Prayer* after the Minister. With what Reason then can it be said against us, That a *Form of Prayer* sung in Verse, and after the Minister's Reading it, is Commendable; but the same said or sung in Prose, is Unlawful?

5. Extemporary conceived Prayers *may* want these spiritual qualifications of *Prayer*, as I believe will not be denyed by those that contend most for them, and they often are manifestly deficient; being sometimes performed without Reverence or Decency of Expression, and by some even without Understanding; and where these Qualifications are found, others may be wanting. The Scriptures observe, That *a Man may make long Prayers*, and yet have a Mind dispos'd to *devour Widows Houses*. He may want *Faith Humility*, *Fervency*, and *Affiance* in God, and yet be able to *Pray without a Form*: And therefore such *Prayers* are not *always* Acceptable to God.

6. Therefore when God promises *the Spirit of Grace and of Supplications* to his People, *Zach.* 12. 10. this Promise doth not extend to enable all Men who are God's Children

dren, to conceive with their Hearts, and expreſs with their Mouths, convenient Deſires, without a *Form*: for as I ſhewed before, every one to whom God gives a Heart and Diſpoſition to pray, has the *Spirit of Prayer*, and he who from this Principle offers up his Deſires to God in a *Form*, prays Acceptably; and he that offers them without that Principle, tho' he do it in unpremeditated and extemporary Words, is rejected, and therefore the Spirit of Prayer is the Grace, the Heart, the Diſpoſition and Ability to Pray, and whether it be with, or without a *Form*, ſuch a Man's Prayers are acceptable to *God*; and 'tis greatly ſuperſtitious to think or teach otherwiſe. If *God* give us a Heart to pray, and by his Providence hath provided us a *Form* to expreſs our Deſires in, or enables us to make one, 'tis ſufficient, and we ought to be thankful.

7. In confirmation of this Account of the *Spirit of Prayer*, we may further obſerve,

1. That no *Worſhip* is acceptable to *God*, that is not offer'd to Him *in Spirit and Truth*, *John* iv. 24. and therefore the Scripture recommends to us *Prayers* in and by the Spirit; but that praying with the Spirit, doth not ſignifie extemporary, unpremeditated Prayers, or exclude *Forms*, will appear from 1 *Cor.* xiv. 15. *I will pray with the Spirit, I will pray with the Underſtanding, I will ſing*

with the Spirit, I will ſing with the Underſtanding alſo. Here we find *ſinging with the Spirit,* as well as *Praying* with it; and whoever ſings otherwiſe, doth not worſhip *God* as he ought; but tho' we are obliged to ſing with the Spirit, yet we muſt and ought to ſing in the *Congregation,* with a ſet *Form of Words,* and therefore for the ſame Reaſon, 'tho' we *pray with the Spirit,* we may *pray by a ſet and prepared Form of Words*: The moſt *ſpiritual Songs* conſiſt of a ſet *Form* of *impoſed Words,* and ſo may the moſt *ſpiritual Prayers. Praying* therefore *with the Spirit* in this place, is ſo far from meaning, or being an Argument for the Uſe of extemporary unpremeditated Prayers, that it is rather an Argument againſt them: For either we are obliged by it to ſing to God in extemporary Hymns, or we are not obliged to pray to Him in extemporary Prayers; ſince it is unreaſonable to interpret *ſinging with the Spirit,* in one ſence, and *praying with the Spirit* in a contrary.

2 And to confirm this further, we find the moſt ſpiritual Perſons addreſſing themſelves to *God* in *Forms*; ſo did *Moſes,* ſo did *David,* as I obſerved before; and ſo did our *Saviour* himſelf on the Croſs, when in his *Agony* he repeated the firſt Verſe of *Pſal.* xxii. in *Syriack,* and as ſome believe, the *whole Pſalm*; by which Act, He recommendeth to us Forms of Prayer in his dying Breath, as the moſt proper means of expreſſing our condition

condition to *God*, and as moſt ſuitable to the Divine Majeſty; and therefore *Praying — in the Spirit*, Epheſ. vi. 18. *Praying in the Holy Ghoſt*, Jude 20. and *with the Spirit*, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 15. ſignifie *praying with Grace in our Hearts*, by the Aſſiſtance and Motion of the *Holy Spirit*: And a Man may as well pray with Grace in his Heart, when he *prays by a Form*, as ſing with Grace in his Heart, when he *ſings by a Form*.

3. We have a Promiſe that God's Spirit will aſſiſt us with this Grace in our Hearts, but we have no Promiſe that He will help us to Words without the uſe of Forms; as will appear from *Rom.* viii. 26. *The Spirit alſo helpeth our Infirmities, for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it ſelf maketh Interceſſion for us with groanings that cannot be uttered*; thoſe inward Motions in the Heart, called here *Groanings*, are that Grace in the Heart with which we ought to pray, and to which the Spirit of *God* doth, and indeed only can help us, and to *pray with this Grace*, is to *pray in* and *with the Spirit*, whether we uſe Words or no; and if we do uſe them, whether we reduce them into a Form firſt, or pour them forth as they preſent themſelves to our Minds; but we have no Promiſe that the *Holy Ghoſt* will always furniſh us with fit words on all occaſions, and therefore ought not to preſume that He will.

4. 'Tis certain that he did furniſh ſome with ſuch Words, for we find both *Prayers* and *Hymns* dictated immediately by him, of which we have Examples in the Hymns of the Bleſſed Virgin and *Zacharias*, and in the Song or Prayer of *Simeon*, and in *Acts* iv. 24. But then it is manifeſt that this was an extraordinary Gift of *God*, and a part of *Prophecy*, and we may not depend on the *Holy Ghoſt* for this Gift, more than for any other Extraordinary Gift, till it be made appear that it was to continue always in the Church, and to be communicated to *All* the Children of *God*. *Praying*, and *ſinging* the *Praiſes of God*, are Duties incumbent on all Chriſtians; but we are no more obliged to pray *Extemporary Prayers*, from any Example of inſpired Men in Scripture, than to ſing *Extemporary Hymns* from the like Examples; to which yet none, I think, pretend.

5. 'Tis very obſervable that even thoſe who compoſed their *Prayers* and *Hymns* by immediate inſpiration, did not generally offer them to *God* in the Congregation till they had firſt reduced them into a *Form*. Thus *David* firſt penned his *Pſalms*, and then delivered them to be ſung, 1 *Chron.* xvi. 7. and 'tis probable the *Prophets*, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 26. did the ſame, for they are ſuppoſed, *every one to have a Pſalm, a Doctrine, a Tongue, a Revelation*, &c. that is, to have them ready, and reduced into

Form

Form for the uſe of the Church when they came together. That this is the meaning of *having a Pſalm*, &c. in this place, will appear very probable, not only from the word; which naturally import this, and can hardly be otherwiſe interpreted, but likewiſe from the *Apoſtles* making a difference between what theſe *Prophets* had prepared, and what was revealed immediately at the time of their being together, *verſ.* 30. *If any thing be revealed to another that ſitteth by, let the firſt hold his peace.* Which ſhews that theſe *Pſalms*, &c. were to give place to ſuch as were immediately inſpired: So far were theſe inſpired Men from countenancing an extemporary, unpremeditated way of ſerving *God*, except where there was an immediate *Revelation* for it, and ſo utterly void of Scripture proof is this great principle of the *Diſſenters* Worſhip, *that the Spirit of Prayer is given to every one of the Faithful to enable them to conceive with the Heart, and expreſs with their Tongues their neceſſities to God without a Form of Prayer.*

8. It lies therefore, my Friends, on your Teachers who are of this perſuaſion, to produce plain Scripture for your principles, or elſe to confeſs that you have laid aſide *Prayers* by *Forms* commanded by *God*, and practiſed by *Holy Men* in Scriptures, to make room for this way of *Praying* of Men's own invention. But further, that place, *Eccl.* v. 1, 2. ſeems to

me to afford a ſtrong Argument againſt ſuch *Prayers, When thou goeſt to the Houſe of God, ——Be not raſh with thy Mouth, and let not thy Heart be haſty to utter any thing before God: for God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth: Therefore let thy words be few.* It is hard to ſay what it is to be *raſh with our Mouths, or haſty to utter any thing before God,* if it be not *raſhneſs* to truſt the expreſſing all our deſires to ſuch uncertain and unpremeditated words, as our invention ſuggeſts unto us, when we come before him, which (as I have ſhewed) the Scriptures give us no promiſe of being ſupplied to us by the Spirit on ordinary occaſions. I appeal to you whether it would not be looked on as raſhneſs for an ordinary Perſon to ſpeak to a Prince, or ſolemn Aſſembly, concerning a Matter of great Moment, in Words unpremeditated and unformed, and we ſhall hardly find any ſo raſh as to venture on it. King *Solomon* here ſeems to have recommended the ſame Modeſty to Men in their Addreſſes to *God.*

9. But in as much as *God* has not expreſly forbidden all *extemporary Prayers,* I would not be underſtood by this to condemn all ſuch as unlawful. There may be ſome Men (tho' not very many) able to expreſs themſelves ſignificantly and decently, *extempore*; and there are ſome occaſions that require it even in Publick; and on theſe occaſions, when

when a Man has not time allowed him to reduce his Deſires into *Form* before he offers them, he may depend on the aſſiſtance of *God*'s Spirit, as we may in all other caſes of Neceſſity, or at leaſt hope for Pardon of courſe to our Infirmities: But to depend on that Spirit, and neglect the Means *God* has given us to provide our ſelves, looks ſo like tempting him, that we ought carefully to avoid it: And I find prudent modeſt Men are aware of this, and tho' they be very famous for extemporary Prayers, yet they pray really as much by a *Form* as if they had the *Common-Prayer* before them. The Secret is only this, they compoſe *Forms of Prayer* of ſeveral ſorts, digeſt them well in their Minds, and commit them to Memory; ſo that they can, on occaſion, tranſpoſe the Parts of them, change, add, or leave out, as they ſee Reaſon; and thus they are, in effect, provided with a *Form*, tho' the People cannot perceive it, and admire them for their readineſs and fluency. It is eaſie for any Man of moderate Parts to manage the Matter thus, but the more ignorant and ordinary Preachers that know not, or are not capable of the Method of it, fall into very indecent and vain Repetitions, and are often at a loſs when they ſtrive to practiſe this way of Addreſſing to *God*.

Another Account may be given of theſe ſeeming Extemporary Prayers not much different from the former, namely, That good Men who make a Conſcience of ſecret Prayer to God, and have grown up in a conſtant Diſcharge of this *Duty*, do by degrees fall into a *Form* even with themſelves; for how much ſoever their Prayers were *Extempore* at firſt, yet having *continual Occaſion* of praying to *God* for the ſame things, they find in time that there is but one beſt way of expreſſing the ſame thing; which neceſſarily leads to a *Form*. However, the various Ways they made uſe of before they ſettled on one, ſerve them as ſo many *Forms* when they come in publick: And by changing of theſe, they ſeem to pray *extempore*.

10. Laſtly, let me obſerve that the uſe of *Extemporary conceived Prayers*, even in caſes of neceſſity, is founded on a general Rule of Scripture only, which commands us to ask of God what we lack: Of which Rule our own prudence makes the Application in ſuch extemporary occaſions, but when we ſet up this Humane Application of this general Rule in oppoſition to that particular manner of asking, commanded by *God*, and practiſed by *Holy Men*, which is by ſet, and premeditated *Forms* in the ordinary Worſhip of *God*, and turn *God*'s way out of his Worſhip to make room for one of our own: This

is

is to diſplace a particular Command of *God* on pretence of guiding our ſelves by a general one: In which we are not only more liable to miſtakes, but we fail of paying due reſpect to God's Directions. For general Commands ought only to take place in ſuch Caſes where *God* has not laid down a particular Rule.

And thus I have examined the Firſt Principle of *Diſſenters*; *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God, whereby they are enabled to Conceive with the Heart, and Expreſs with the Mouth convenient Deſires to God.*

IV. I come now to ſpeak to the Second; *That all Forms of Prayer are Unlawful to Chriſtians; and that it is a Sin to join in a Worſhip where they are uſed, or ſo much as to be preſent at it.* If there be any of you for whom I intend theſe Papers, of this Opinion, as I fear ſome of you are, and all of you do in your Practice comply with thoſe that maintain it, and therefore cannot acquit your ſelves from countenancing it; I deſire you to obſerve, That if there were no Harm in the Opinion, or if it were a meer Speculation, we ſhould not be much concerned at their Miſtake. But by what I have ſhewed of the Scripture Authority of *Forms*, it is plain, That they who maintain this Principle, do not only *teach for Doctrines the Command-*

Commandments of Men; but, in effect, ſet themſelves up above Chriſt, and countermand what he has required. They not only add to the Goſpel a new Command, by teaching that to be Unlawful, which Chriſt has no where Condemned; but they teach that to be Unlawful, which he has poſitively Commanded. Whoever therefore do Teach *Forms of Prayer* to be Unlawful, or Countenance thoſe that do Teach this Doctrine of Men, cannot acquit themſelves from the Imputation of Reſiſting the *Holy Ghoſt*, by whoſe Inſpiration the Word of God is penn'd.

I can foreſee only One thing that can be alledged in favour of thoſe who maintain this Opinion: And 'tis, That to Pray *with*, or *without a Form* (excepting the *Lord's-Prayer*) is in it ſelf indifferent; and that therefore the aſſerting the Uſe of *Forms*, is not a Matter of ſuch weight, as to juſtifie our Contending with our Brethren about it; and that it ſeems Uncharitable in us to inſiſt on a thing which they are fully perſwaded is Unlawful, and we our ſelves count Indifferent.

1. But in Anſwer to this, it is to be obſerved, *Firſt*, That an Opinion which neceſſarily divides him who believes it from the Communion of all the Eſtabliſhed Churches in the World, cannot be of ſo little moment as the Objection would make it. And ſuch is this

this Opinion of the Unlawfulneſs of *Forms of Prayer*; ſince there neither is, nor has been any Eſtabliſhed Church theſe 1500 Years, but has maintained their Lawfulneſs, and uſed them in the Service of God; and therefore whoever believes them to be Unlawful, in whatever Age he had lived, he muſt have ſeparated from all the Eſtabliſhed Churches of the World at that time: And ſurely an Opinion that neceſſarily produces ſuch a Diviſion, muſt be of mighty Conſequence, whether true or falſe, and ought to be carefully examined; and if falſe, to be zealouſly oppoſed. But

See *Durel* and *Knox*'s Book of Diſc.

2. I ſuppoſe it will be granted, That Eating Swine's Fleſh, or Drinking Wine, are as indifferent as uſing a *Form of Prayer*, and of leſs Concern to the Souls of Men: and that therefore to Teach theſe to be Unlawful, would be as innocent a Miſtake, as to Teach the Unlawfulneſs of *Forms*. For if we compare theſe two Doctrines together, and the Miſchiefs that each of them have, or may hereafter produce; it is hardly conceivable, that the Forbidding the Uſe of ſome particular Meats, ſhould have ſo many ill Effects as the Forbidding *Forms of Prayer* has had already. Yet it is obſervable how St. *Paul* judges of that Doctrine, 1 *Tim.* 4. 1. *In the*

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latter times (ſaith he) *ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and Doctrines of devils—— Forbidding to marry, and to abſtain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thankſgiving.* You ſee here St. *Paul* counts it a Departure from the Faith, and a Doctrine of Devils, to forbid, as Unlawful in it ſelf, any ſort of Meat which God has created for the Uſe of Man: And if it be ſo Criminal, to Teach any ſort of Meat to be Unclean, when God has not Forbidden it; then ſure, to Teach a *Form of Prayer* to be Unlawful, when God has Commanded it, muſt be a very ill Doctrine. And this Conſideration alone ought to make thoſe who maintain it, or any ſuch Doctrine whereby they are obliged to condemn their Brethren as practiſing unlawful Things, to examine it carefully and impartially by the Word of God, leſt they be impoſed on by ſeducing Spirits.

The great Deſign of the Devil, is, to bring us into an entire Subjection to his Will. But when he deſpairs of this, his next Attempt is, to ſhare with God in our Obedience; and impoſe new Commands of his *Own* upon us, as if they were *God*'s, and ſo to procure himſelf to be *obey'd*. This he doth moſt ſucceſsfully, by giving them an Appearance of Religion, and *of more then ordinary ſtrictneſs*. Thus in St. *Paul*'s time, under colour of *Mortification*

tification, he forbad *Meats* and *Marriage*, as *unlawful*, which *God* had *allowed*; *ſpeaking Lyes in Hypocriſie, and under ſhew of Religion.* And thus, 'tis to be feared, he has prevailed on ſome, under colour of *greater Spirituality*, to abſtain from *Forms of Prayer*, as Unlawful, which God has enjoyned.

And here it is very remarkable, That where-ever the Devil gains this Point with Men, and brings them to believe a thing to be forbidden by God, which he has not forbidden, he ſoon brings a ſuper-added *Command* of his *Own*, in *Competition* with ſome of *God*'s, and prevails with them to preferr *his* Commands to *God*'s; and ſo plungeth them into direct *Diſobedience*, which was his Deſign at firſt. Thus when he had prevailed with Men to abſtain from *Marriage*, they ſoon fell not only to *Commit Fornication*, but even, in ſome caſes, to *Allow* it, rather than *Marriage*, (as the *Papiſts* do.) And by perſwading Men to abſtain from *Forms of Prayer*, as Unlawful, he has deprived them, in many places, of all Opportunity of Publick *Worſhip*; and made them chuſe rather not to ſerve God at all in Publick, than with a *Form*; which is the Caſe of many Thouſands now in this Kingdom, who worſhip God publickly no where. But,

3. This Doctrine, of the Unlawfulneſs of *Praying by Forms*, is no ſuch indifferent thing, that

that we may ſafely indulge Men in their own ſenſe about it; ſince it is very apt to puff them up, and make them take falſe meaſures in judging of their own Condition, and of the influence of *God*'s Spirit upon them.

We know that all *good Men* have the Spirit of *God*, and are guided and influenced by it in the whole tenor of their Lives; we make no doubt but they are aſſiſted by Him in their Prayers, but no leſs in forgiving an Injury, or reſiſting a Temptation; and his influence on a good *Man*'s Mind is rather greater and more ſenſible in theſe and other Acts of *Religion*, than in *Prayer*. *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs, Temperance, are the Fruits of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22. And it is principally by theſe we ought to conclude that we have that Spirit. But the *Opinion* of the Unlawfulneſs of *Forms of Prayer*, on a perſwaſion that *the Spirit of God enables every Child of God to conceive with the Heart, and expreſs with the Mouth ſuitable deſires*, entitles every one to *God*'s Spirit in ſome meaſure, that is able to expreſs himſelf in apt and fluent Words, tho without the other Graces of the Spirit, and expoſes every one to deſpair, that is not able to do this, as looking on himſelf to be deſtitute of the Spirit, tho' otherwiſe meek, humble, and charitable, and endowed with ſuch Graces as are much more certain ſigns of his preſence. Nay, ſo far are many deluded

deluded by this *Opinion*, that they judge themſelves or others, Children of *God*, and in his Favour, according as they are more or leſs endowed with this Gift, without reſpect to other Qualifications. And I dare appeal to *your ſelves*, Whether ſome very *Immoral Perſons* guilty of *groſs* and *ſcandalous Crimes*, have not been eminent for this *Gift of Prayer*? And whether ſuch Perſons are not apt to flatter themſelves that they are the Children of *God*, and endowed with his Spirit, notwithſtanding all their Wickedneſs? And it is impoſſible either to convince theſe Perſons of their miſtake, or to comfort *poor ignorant People*, dejected only for want of this Gift, whilſt they are poſſeſſed with this *Opinion* of the Unlawfulneſs *of Forms*.

Which in the 4th. place ought not to be countenanced or indulged as an indifferent thing, becauſe it has been a great hindrance to ſecret *Devotion*: Every Chriſtian ought at leaſt twice a Day to addreſs himſelf to *God* in ſecret Prayer; but a great part of the *World* cannot do it without a *Form*; *Children* and *ignorant Perſons* are at a *loſs* for *Words*, and even *other People*, are often not able to find them *readily*, eſpecially when wearied, dull, or indiſpoſed, as is ſometimes the *condition* of the beſt Chriſtians; this makes ſecret Prayer, at leaſt *a conſtant regular courſe of it*, uneaſie to moſt that are abſolutely againſt all Uſe

of

of *Forms*, and it occaſions too many to neglect it, which otherwiſe would not: And as for *Children* and *ignorant People* amongſt thoſe of this Perſwaſion, I am well aſſured many of them never bow their Knees in ſecret to *God*; and ſeveral of thoſe that are grown up, are forced to ſpeak aloud, or cannot pray at all, which is againſt the nature of ſecret Prayer; and expoſes not only the Perſons that uſe it to the cenſure of *Hypocriſie*, but the Duty to *Contempt*. 'Tis on this account that the Pious Cuſtom of Training up *Young People* to a *conſtant courſe of Devotion*, in their Morning and Evening ſecret Prayers, is too univerſally laid aſide among you, as I have found by experience, and for the truth of the Obſervation I dare appeal to all of the *Diſſenters*. On the contrary I am well aſſured that there cannot be a more effectual or eaſie method to revive and continue this regular and conſtant uſe of ſecret Prayers, than to oblige every one to ſome certain *Forms* every Moning and Evening, which they may not omit, whatever other Prayers they uſe: But this can never be done whilſt the Opinion of the unlawfulneſs of *Forms* prevails; and therefore all good People are obliged to oppoſe it, as they would retrieve the conſtant uſe of ſecret Prayers; which ſhews that this is no indifferent matter, as the objection would ſuggeſt, but of great weight, and fit to be contended for. I will

I will not mention ſome *other Reaſons* that are of great moment, becauſe they would but exaſperate, and tend to make the Duty of Prayer, when performed *ex tempore*, ridiculous, which ill Men might extend (as it too often happens) to expoſe *Devotion* in general; ſuch are the indecent Expreſſions which ſometimes fall from Perſons that pray thus: I will only obſerve to you, that *Extemporary Prayers* of ſome Preachers have too often given occaſion of Offence to ſerious Perſons even among your ſelves. 'Tis certain, that to print ſome of them, as they have been ſpoken, as thoſe that we make uſe of are printed, would not be for the *Honour* of the *Holy Spirit*, to whom they are aſcribed, nor much recommend them to ſerious Men. But I eſteem it an ill thing for Men to ridicule one anothers *Devotion* whatever it is.

V. There remains yet the Third *Opinion* of *Diſſenters* which they advance againſt us in this matter of *Prayer*, to be Examined, *That the Miniſter is the Mouth of the Congregation, and that the People have nothing to do but to join with him in their Hearts*; An *Opinion* far from any Authority of Scripture, which expreſſly requires us, *Rom.* 15. 6. with *one Mind*, and *one Mouth, to glorifie God*: We produce this, and many other Places and Examples in Scripture, for the People's joyning their Voices, and bearing a part in their Praiſes

and Prayers; and we are assured there is no Scripture forbids it; and therefore when you Condemn it, or teach it to be Unlawful, we must charge it upon *You*, as an instance of *Your Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* Which is all I think needful to be said to this Head, after what I have shewed before in defence of our contrary practice from Scripture; and, I think, sufficient to induce you seriously to consider it.

And thus, I presume, I have faithfully examined the Rules and Examples the Scriptures afford us for the performance of that part of our publick Worship that consists in Prayers, and compared the Service of our Church, and the *Dissenters* way of Praying, with them, and made it appear that our performance of this Duty, both as to the Matter and Manner, is agreeable to the Commandments of God, and to the Examples of Holy Men recorded in Scripture: And that the Service the *Dissenters* have substituted in the room thereof, has in many particulars laid aside God's Commands, and deserted the Examples of Scripture, and is in the main part thereof an immediate *Invention of Men.*

And I intreat you who are of this Persuasion, and adhere to these Principles of Worship which I have now mentioned, and shewed to be disagreeable to Scripture, to consi-

der ſeriouſly whether you are not thereby literally guilty of that Sin with which our *Saviour* taxeth the Jews, *Mark* 7. 7. of *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; And alſo of that Superſtition condemned by St. *Paul*, *Col.* 2. 21. which ſaith, *Touch not*, *taſte not*, *handle not*, (that is, which teaches to forbear thoſe things which God has made Lawful) *after the Doctrines and Commandments of Men*: And I beſeech *God* to enlighten your Mind; to make a true Judgment in it, that you may deliver your *Souls*.

CHAP. III.

Of Hearing.

SECT. I.

What the Holy Scriptures preſcribe concerning it.

ONE great Deſign of Our Chriſtian Aſſemblies is *Hearing*, and that which is to be heard is *the Word of God*. I ſhall proceed in examining this, in the ſame manner as I have done in the former Chapters; And conſider, Firſt, What Directions the Scriptures afford us for the publick performance

of this Duty. Secondly, Shall compare our own practice with them. And, Thirdly, That of the *Diſſenters.*

Firſt then, *God* has poſitively Commanded us to read His *Word* in our publick Aſſemblies. So *Deut.* 31. 10. *In the Feaſt of Tabernacles, when all Iſrael is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place where the Lord ſhall chooſe, Thou ſhalt read this Law before all Iſrael in their Hearing. Gather the people together, Men, Women and Children, and thy Stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and obſerve to do all the Words of this Law.* And 'tis obſerved, *Joſ.* 8. 35. that *there was not a word of all that Moſes Commanded, which Joſhua read not before all the Congregation.*

Neither was this confined to their Solemn Aſſemblies at *Jeruſalem*; It was likewiſe a conſtant part of their *Sabbath* Service in their Synagogues. As we may learn from *Acts* 13. 14. where it is obſerved, that *Paul and Barnabas went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, and ſate down; and after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the Rulers of the Synagogue ſent unto them,* &c. and St. *Paul* takes notice, *verſe* 27. that the *Prophets were read every Sabbath-day*, meaning undoubtedly in their Aſſemblies. And St. *James* (*Acts* 15. 21.) of *Moſes* his *being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day.*

II. This

II. This reading the Law was the great, and moſt effectual means *God* provided for preſerving the knowledge of himſelf amongſt his People; and where it was omitted, the People immediately ſunk into *Idolatry*; and the beſt Reformation began, and was carried on by Reſtoring this Ordinance. Thus 'tis obſerved of *Joſiah*, 2 *Chron.* 34. 29. that he gathered together all the *Elders* of *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*——*And all the Inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and the Prieſts and the Levites, and all the people great and ſmall, and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the Covenant that was found in the Houſe of the Lord.* The like is obſerved of *Ezra*, *Neh.* 8. 3. *And he read therein before the ſtreet that was before the Water-gate, from Morning until Mid-day, before the Men and the Women, and all that could underſtand.* 'Tis remarkable that after the Captivity, the *Jews* never fell into *Idolatry*: and the chief reaſon given by themſelves was the ſtrict Obſervation of this Ordinance of *God*, the Law being conſtantly read to them afterwards publickly in their Synagogues; ſo powerfully doth *God* bleſs his own Ordinances to preſerve thoſe that uſe them from Error and Sin.

III. From the practice of the Synagogue in reading the *Law* and the *Prophets*, the like Order was brought into the Chriſtian Church; and *Reading* was made a part of the Office

of the *Chriſtian Elders*, as it was before of the *Jewiſh*. And hence it is that *Timothy* is Commanded by St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 13. *To give attendance to Reading* as well as *to Exhortation and Doctrine.* And the inſpired Writings of the *Apoſtles* were read in the Chriſtian Aſſemblies, as well as the *Law* and *Prophets* among the *Jews*; according to St. *Paul*'s Command, *Col.* 2. 16. *When this Epiſtle is read amongſt you, cauſe that it alſo be read in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewiſe read the Epiſtle from Laodicea.* And it was but reaſon, ſince the Goſpel contained the Chriſtian Law, that it ſhould be read in the Chriſtian Aſſemblies, as well as the Law of *Moſes* was in the Synagogues. And that it was ſo read in the firſt Chriſtian Aſſemblies, I might ſhew by many Inſtances out of the Ancient Fathers, if there were occaſion.

IV. This publick *Reading* the Law was of ſo great Reputation, that it is termed *Preaching* it; as we may ſee from *Acts* 15. 21. *For Moſes of old time hath in every City them that preach him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day.* The word *Preaching* has a peculiar ſence in the *New Teſtament*, and ſignifies properly to Declare or Proclaim the Word of *God*, as a Herauld or Cryer proclaims the Laws or Orders of a King. Hence only thoſe that Proclaim'd the Goſpel to ſuch as had not heard it before, or read the *Old Teſta-*

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ment to the People, are ſaid to *Preach. Preaching* is diſtinguiſhed from *Teaching* and *Exhortation*; and 'tis obſervable, that in the whole *New Teſtament*, tho' reading the Scriptures is called *Preaching*, yet interpreting them, applying them, or exhorting the People from them in a Chriſtian Auditory, is never called by that name.

If it be objected that St. *Paul* is ſaid to *preach* to the Diſciples, *Acts* 20. 7. when he only in probability made a Sermon, or Exhortation to Believers, as is uſual now; I anſwer, that the Original of this Word (διαλέγετο) is never tranſlated *preach* in any other place of the New Teſtament, and ſhould not have been here, but *diſcours'd*, *diſputed*, *ſpake*, or *reaſon'd*; ſo it is tranſlated in *Acts* 17. 2, 17. 18, 19. 19. 8, 9. *Heb.* 12. 5, *&c.* for the Original Words which properly ſignifie *preaching*, are κηρύσσω and εὐαγγελίζω. From all which it is manifeſt that there are only two ways by which the Word of God is properly *preached*; the firſt is, when it is declared to thoſe that never heard of it before; and the ſecond is when the very words of the Scripture are read publickly to the People as a Cryer doth a *Proclamation*, which he doth not word himſelf, but reads it in the words in which it is delivered to him.

In ſhort, The Scriptures are *Sermons* out of the Mouth of *God*, being dictated by his

Holy Spirit; for the Reading of which to the *People* for their *Conviction and Inſtruction*, there is a peculiar *Command of God*; and where this *Ordinance* is duely obſerved, they they are ſure of the *Word of Life*; and 'tis impoſſible they ſhould be ignorant of their Duty, *for the Scriptures are ſufficient to make them wiſe to Salvation*; and the hearing them with Humility and Attention, is a Means ſufficient to beget *Faith* in the Hearts of thoſe that hear them; for they are *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed to all good Works*, as we ſee 1 *Tim.* iii. 16, 17.

V. We find in *Holy Scripture*, that the *Publick Reading* of the *Word of God* was with great Solemnity. 'Tis obſerved *Nehem.* viii. 5. *When* Ezra *opened the Book, all the people ſtood up, and* Ezra *bleſſed the Lord, the great God; and all the people anſwered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads, and worſhipped the Lord with their faces to the ground*; and I find it generally agreed, that both the Readers and Hearers ſtood up whilſt the Law was read, tho' not when other things were read or taught; hence it is obſerved, *Luke* iv. 16. that our Saviour *ſtood up for to read*; and *Verſ.* xx. after cloſing the Book, that he *ſat down* to teach: Hence, *Rev.* v. God is repreſented in alluſion

ſion to the *High-Prieſt*, with a Book in his Right Hand, containing the Revelations of his Will; and the Lamb, as his Miniſter, takes it out of his Hand to declare the Contents of it; and *Verſ.* viii. *When he had taken the Book, the four Beaſts and four and twenty Elders fell down before the Lamb.——And they ſung a new ſong*: The Angels join with them, *Verſ.* 11. and the whole Creation, *Verſ.* 13. From whence we ſee the Scriptures teach us to receive the Revelations of God's Will out of the Book of Life, with Adoration and Praiſes: And therefore we find that at the reading the Law, Confeſſions, and Praiſes of God, were intermixed, and ſucceeded one another, *Neh.* ix. 3. *And they ſtood up in their place, and read in the Book of the Lord their God, one fourth part of the Day, and another fourth part they Confeſſed and Worſhipped the Lord their God.*

VI. We find that the Word of God is to be read in ſuch a Language as the People underſtand. After the Captivity, the People being Born and Educated in a ſtrange Land, their Language was changed, and they did not underſtand, at leaſt Univerſally, the pure Hebrew in which the Law was firſt written; therefore when *Ezra* read in the Law, a certain number of the Prieſts and *Levites* interpreted the Words of the Law, as *Ezra* read them to the People: *Neh.* 8. 8. *And*

8. *And they cauſed the people to underſtand the Law, and the people ſtood in their place; ſo they read in the Book, in the Law of God diſtinctly, and gave the ſence, and cauſed them to underſtand the reading*: And this Cuſtom continueth among the Jews to this Day: firſt the Hebrew Text is read, and then a Tranſlation or Paraphraſe, in a Language underſtood by the Hearers. And indeed there may be good reaſon for reading the Originals in Publick Aſſemblies, ſuch a Cuſtom being an effectual means to preſerve the knowledge of them; but they cannot be uſeful to the People without a Tranſlation. Therefore St. *Paul* doth not abſolutely forbid ſpeaking in Unknown Tongues in the Church, but orders, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 27. *Let one interpret; but if there be no Interpreter, let him keep ſilence in the Church.*

VII. We find that after reading the Word of God, there was ſometimes an Enlargement or Comment on ſome part of it, and an Exhortation to the People: Thus when our Saviour had read a portion of Scripture, He applied it to the People in a Diſcourſe to that purpoſe. But it doth not appear that this was conſtantly done, on the contrary it is rather probable that it was not. For had there been a conſtant Proviſion for ſuch Enlargement, and Expoſition of the Law, and Exhortation from it, there had been no occaſion for the

the Rulers of the Synagogue, *Acts* 13. 15. to ſend to St. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, after the reading of the Law and Prophets, that Meſſage we find there, *Ye Men and Brethren, if ye have any Word of Exhortation for the People, ſay on.* St. *Paul* ſuppoſes him who *Teaches*, and him whoſe Office it was to *Exhort*, diſtinct from him that *Ruled*, and him that *Miniſtred*, Rom. xii. And it doth not appear that every Church was furniſhed with all theſe *Officers*. The ſame St. *Paul* joined *Exhortation* and *Doctrine* with *Reading*, in his Charge to *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* iv. 13. which ſhews that they went together, but whether indiſpenſibly or no, doth not appear; tho' it is manifeſt in the practice of moſt Churches in the Ages after the Apoſtles they were all generally exercis'd in the Publick Worſhip.

VIII Laſtly, We find that they had a *Summary* of the Principal Doctrines of the Goſpel, which they delivered to the People, and by which they ordered their own Diſcourſes, and judged of what was delivered by others. Thus St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.* i 13. *Hold faſt the Form of ſound Words which thou haſt heard of me*; and Chap. ii. Verſ. 2. *And the things that thou haſt heard of me among many Witneſſes, the ſame commit thou to faithful Men, who ſhall be able to teach others*: Perhaps this may be that *proportion of Faith* according to which

which the Prophets are exhorted to propheſie, *Rom.* xii. 6. I think it is not doubted but this *Form of ſound Words* contained the main Fundamentals of Chriſtianity; and St. *Paul* tells us what thoſe were, *Heb.* vi. 1, 2. *Therefore leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and Faith towards God, of the Doctrine of Baptiſms, and of Laying on of Hands, and of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and of Eternal Judgment.* In all probability therefore, the Form of ſound Words delivered by St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, and by him to others, contained theſe ſix Heads or Principles of Chriſtianity, which every Chriſtian was obliged to hear and learn.

SECT. II.

The Practice of Our Church in Reading and Preaching the Word.

THeſe are the Rules and Examples the Scriptures propoſe to us for our feeding the People with the Word of Life, and their Hearing it in Publick. Let us in the ſecond place compare the *Practice of Our Church* with them, and ſurely no Copy can come nearer the Original.

1. For

1. For firſt, Our Miniſters are expreſly oblig'd in their Ordination, diligently to read all the Canonical Scriptures of the *Old* and *New Teſtament* unto the People Aſſembled in the Church where they ſhall be appointed to ſerve.

2. Our Church has diſpoſed the Holy Scriptures in a certain Order, and has appointed four or more Chapters to be read every day in the Publick Congregations, by which means all the moſt edifying parts of the *Old Teſtament* are Ordered to be read once a year, and the *New Teſtament* (except the *Revelations*) thrice in the ſame time; And ſome ſelect Chapters of the *Revelations* are appointed on extraordinary occaſions. There are indeed ſome Chapters (about one tenth) of the *Old Teſtament*, left out of this Order: But then it is to be obſerved, that thoſe which are left out, are either Genealogies, Names of Perſons and Places, Hiſtorical Repetitions, or ſome obſcure and myſtical Prophecies in *Ezekiel*, which are not ſo proper for an ordinary Aſſembly (for which reaſons, ſome part of the *Revelations* is alſo left out) yet theſe are not excluded, tho' not particularly Commanded. The general obligation on every Clergy-Man in his Ordination to *read all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament*, ſtill allows him to read theſe, and alſo obliges him to it when

when he ſhall perceive that it may be for the edification of the People.

3. Beſides this Order for the whole Scriptures, on every *Lord's-day*, and other ſolemn occaſions, there are appointed certain ſelect Portions out of the Epiſtles and Goſpels to be read, which are adapted to the occaſion; and contain ſome great myſtery of our Faith, or other weighty matter neceſſary to our Edification.

4. For the more ſolemnity of theſe readings; Our Church joins with each of them Praiſes, Thankſgivings or Confeſſions, according to what we find practiſed in the *Holy Scriptures.*

5. That the People may benefit, and be Edified by *hearing* the Word of *God*, a plain Authentick and moſt excellent Tranſlation is provided by publick Authority, in which the Scriptures are read to the People. This was the firſt Care of our Church in the Reformation, and the generality of *Diſſenters* are forced to be beholden to it for the word of Life, and draw all the knowledge that they have from the Fountains which our Biſhops opened for them, by Tranſlating the word of *God*, and putting it into a Language they underſtand.

6. 'Tis ordered in our Church that the Miniſters ſhall explain ſome part of the *Holy Scriptures* every *Lord's-day*, and exhort their Congregations in a Sermon. 7. To

7. To inculcate the great Myſteries of our Faith the better, our Church has appointed certain ſolemn times, wherein once in the year they are obliged to explain, and inculcate every great Myſtery of our Faith, and moſt material paſſages of the Goſpel. Such are the Conception, Birth, Paſſion, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of Our *Saviour*.

Laſtly, There is provided a *Form* of *Sound Words* in a ſhort and plain Catechiſm; in which are contained the firſt principles of the Oracles of *God*; this is adapted, as it ought to be, to the capacity of Children, and is indeed *ſincere Milk*, without School Notions, or hard words. And all the ſix Principles which the Apoſtle mentions, *Heb.* vi. 1, 2. are briefly explained in it, and yet largely enough to make thoſe that attend to it, wiſe to Salvation. The Teaching and Explaining theſe Fundamentals, is a part of our Publick Inſtruction, and injoined as a conſtant Duty on Miniſters and People in our ſolemn Worſhip. The Miniſter in each Pariſh being required diligently upon *Sundays* and *Holy-days*—— openly in the Church to inſtruct and examine ſo many Children of his Pariſh ſent unto him, as he ſhall think convenient, in ſome part of the Catechiſm, and the People are obliged to come at the time appointed, and obediently to hear.

And

And by our Twelfth Canon, for the better grounding of the People in the Principles of Chriſtian Religion, 'tis ordained, That the Heads of the Catechiſm being divided into ſo many parts as there are *Sundays* in the year, ſhall be explained to the People in every Pariſh Church.

This is the care our Church has taken to Teach the People in their Publick Aſſemblies, and the method is ſo effectual, that 'tis ſcarce conceivable how any one who duly conforms to theſe Orders ſhould be ignorant of any thing that concerns his Soul.

And by the Bleſſing of *God*, the effect is ſuch that we may affirm without Vanity or Partiality, that our Clergy, and Laity, eſpecially where we can prevail with them to conform to the Rules of our Church, are generally much more knowing, modeſt, governable, devout and charitable, than perhaps may be found in any other Church, of which our late conteſts with the *Papiſts*, and behaviour under their Government, and ſince the preſent Revolution, are Evident proofs.

SECT.

SECT. III.

The Practice of the Diſſenters in Hearing and Reading the Word.

I Come now to conſider with you my Friends who diſſent from us, how this great Duty of Teaching the People the Law of *God* is perform'd in your Aſſemblies, and to compare your practice in this point with the Scripture Rules and Examples. Which I ſhall do with the ſame Candour and Integrity that I have hitherto endeavoured to obſerve.

I. And here I muſt needs ſay that your Teachers ſeem to have had very little Regard, either to Scripture-Rules or Examples in framing this part of your Worſhip, having laid aſide all thoſe methods of inſtruction that the Scriptures recommend to us, except it be that of Expoſition and Exhortation: Which among you is called *Preaching*, in ſo much that tho' a Man frequent your Meetings all his Life, yet he has no ſecurity, or hardly poſſibility of learning from your publick Teachings all the great Myſteries of his Religion, or the neceſſary principles of his Faith.

1. For firſt, Your Preachers are intirely left to their choice what place of Scripture they will explain, or what Subject they will handle: And hence it happens that hardly

any one Man in his life ever goes through the neceſſary Articles of Faith, or of Practice in his publick Sermons, and for the Truth of this, I appeal to your ſelves.

2. You have no ſummary of Principles injoined to be either Read or Taught in your Publick Aſſemblies. A Catechiſm you have, but neither your *Directory* nor *Practice* make it any part of your *Lord's-day-Service*: And beſides, your Catechiſm is ſuch, that it no ways anſwers the Deſign of a *Form of ſound Words*. I have already ſhewed, that ſuch a *Form* ſhould contain only the firſt and neceſſary Principles of the *Oracles of God*, in ſuch Words and Methods as may make it eaſily apprehended and retained by the weak and unlearned, which make up the bulk of the People. But your Catechiſm is full of *Hard Word, School Terms*, and *Abſtruſe Notions*, no wiſe neceſſary to be known by the generality of Chriſtians, or poſſible to be underſtood by Children, or unlearned Perſons, for whoſe Edification principally a Catechiſm ought to be contrived. Beſides all this, it is ſo long and intricate, even the *Shorter*, that not one Child in ten ever gets it by heart, nor one in Five hundred retains it, as I have found by experience, and deſire that you would judge of this matter as you find upon Trial. Laſtly, After all, it is imperfect; ſome of the Principles of the *Apoſtles*

ſtles Catechiſm, being quite left out of it, I mean *laying on of Hands*, joined with *Baptiſm*, *Heb.* 6. 2. A great defect ſure in a Catechiſm to leave out a Fundamental of Chriſtianity.

II. But the moſt ſad and deplorable defect of your performance of this Duty, is your caſting out the reading of the Word of *God*, from moſt of your Publick Aſſemblies, directly contrary to *God's Inſtitution* and *Ordinance* for the *Inſtruction* of his Church; inſomuch that in many of your Meetings, ſetting aſide a Verſe or two for a *Text*, or *Quotation* at the diſcretion of the *Teacher*, the Voice of *God* is never publickly heard amongſt them This is matter of Fact, and undeniable; and in all the Meetings in the *North* of *Ireland* in a whole Year, perhaps there is not ſo much Scripture read, as in one Day in our Church, by the ſtricteſt Enquiry which I cou'd make. One would think this alone were ſufficient to ſhew the People where the *Worſhip of God* is to be found in its *Purity*, and to prove our Aſſemblies to be the *True Church* of *God*, againſt all that come in competition with us; whereof ſome hide the *Word of God* in a ſtrange Language, and others baniſh it out of their Meetings. It being in our Congregations only, that the Voice of *God* is heard ſpeaking to his *People*, without *cover or gloſs*. Sure it is a ſad thing

that a Man may go to moſt Meetings many Years, and never hear one intire Chapter read in them. Now this omiſſion is the more inexcuſable in you, and muſt render you manifeſtly ſelf-condemned.

1. Firſt, Becauſe you ſo vehemently preſs the neceſſity of *Preaching*, and quote the *Holy Scriptures* to prove it. In which, reading the *Law* (as is ſhewed before) is termed *Preaching*, *Act.* 15. 21. but interpreting the Scriptures, applying them, or exhorting the Congregation from them in a fixed Chriſtian Auditory (which you count *Preaching*) is never called ſo in the whole New Teſtament. Therefore by laying aſide the reading the Scriptures in your publick Aſſemblies, you have intirely caſt aſide Preaching, in the proper Scripture ſence of it. But,

2. This muſt render you ſelf-condemned, becauſe you pretend to honour the Holy Scriptures above other Chriſtians: Your Mouths, Commendably and with juſt Reaſon, are continually full of the Praiſes of the Holy Bible; you own it, with the generality of the Reformed Churches, for the only ſufficient Rule of Faith; you appeal to it, and ſeem to found your ſelves on it: And yet your not allowing the Reading of it a conſtant place in your Religious Aſſemblies, makes it ſeem as if you had a very low Opinion of it in your Hearts. If you really value

lue it as you profeſs, why do you baniſh the Reading of it from your publick Worſhip, to make room for Diſcourſes, Lectures, and Sermons of your own Teachers? Remember of whom it is ſaid, (*Mark* 7. 6.) *This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me.* While you thus juſtle the Word of God out of your Solemn Meetings, to make room for your own Sermons, I beſeech you to conſider whether this be not a laying aſide the Commandments of God for Mens Inventions; unleſs you will call your *Sermons*, (as ſome *Quakers* are ſaid to do) as much the *Word of God* as the Bible.

III. I look on this as ſo material a Point, and conceive the *Honour of the Holy Scriptures* and the *Salvation of Chriſtians* to be ſo deeply concerned in it, that I think my ſelf obliged to examine the Pretences I have found to juſtifie it: Tho' I confeſs they ſeem to me ſo weak, that I am afraid I ſhall be almoſt ſuſpected by indifferent Perſons not to do Juſtice in repreſenting them: For it is unaccountable that any body ſhould urge ſo *ſlight Reaſons* for ſo *conſiderable* an *Omiſſion*: And yet theſe are all I have ever met with, or heard from you.

The firſt Reaſon I have heard urg'd, is, *That the people are obliged to read the Scriptures at home, and being thus acquainted with them,*

the Reading of them is not neceſſary in their publick Meetings. But to this I Anſwer,

1. That we ſee from what has been ſaid, That the Reading of the *Holy Scriptures* is by *God's Appointment* a part of his *ſolemn publick Worſhip*; therefore *to leave it out* in *our Aſſemblies*, on *any pretence whatſoever*, is to lay aſide his *Command*, and ſo to corrupt and diſmember his *Worſhip*.

2. The private performance of a Duty ought by no means to interfere with, or hinder the publick. We muſt pray to *God*, praiſe him, and inſtruct our Families in private; and yet *God* forbid that our doing theſe *privately*, ſhould baniſh the uſe of them from our *Publick Aſſemblies*; or that any one ſhould think himſelf excuſed from Attending on the Publick Performance of them, on account of his Private Diligence in them: And the ſame Rule holds for Reading the *Holy Scriptures*.

3. *God* tells the Children of *Iſrael*, *Deut. 6. 6. That theſe Words which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thine heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently to thy Children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up—— and thou ſhalt write them on the poſts of thy houſe.* Here is as much private diligence in Reading and Teaching the Law required of the *Iſraelites*

raelites, as any Chriſtian can pretend to exerciſe; and yet all this care to preſerve the knowledge of the *Law* by private ſtudy and exerciſe, did not make the Reading it in their Synagogues unneceſſary, or prevent *God* from requiring them to uſe it a part of his publick *Worſhip*, *Deut.* 31. 11. And therefore all your diligence in reading the Scriptures privately, or *Your Teachers* exhorting and requiring you to do it, ought not to warrant *Their* or *Your* diſpenſing with the *Command of God*, that appoints the reading his *Word*, as part of his publick Service. But,

4. When People are left to themſelves in private, they may either do, or not do a thing as they pleaſe: And we are aſſured, That there are many who come to Church, and hear the *Word of God* read there, that neither can, nor ever wou'd be at the pains to read it in private. It is therefore a great Temptation to the People to be negligent, and a great want of Care in a Church, to leave ſo material a thing as *the reading of the Word of God*, to private diligence. We find by experience, that where no publick effectual Care is taken to inform the generality of Men, the *Knowledge of God's Word* ſenſibly decays, and is in a fair way to be loſt. The *Papiſts* read the Scriptures in a Language that the People do not underſtand, and we

ſee into what *groſs ignorance* they are fallen by this means. Thoſe of *Your Perſwaſion*, (generally ſpeaking) do not read them at all in *your Meetings*, and the conſequence of this is, That *many of your common People are ſtrangers to the very Hiſtory of the Bible, and the Firſt Principles of Chriſtianity*; as I have *found on Tryal*, to my great *trouble* and *aſtoniſhment*. This Pretence therefore of *Peoples reading the Holy Scriptures in private*, will by no means juſtifie *you*, for breaking *God's Command*, in omitting the *publick reading them*, as a part of *God's Service* in the Congregations.

The Second Pretence that I have met with for this Omiſſion, is, *That ſince the penning of the Scriptures, and ſetling of the Church by the Apoſtles, the caſe is much altered with Chriſtians*; *That Printing was not then known, and conſequently Copies of the Bible were few, and hard to come by: Few could then read them if they had them, and therefore* (ſay ſome) *Reading the Scriptures in the Aſſemblies was then abſolutely neceſſary, otherwiſe the generality muſt have been ſtrangers to them: But now Copies of the Bible, by means of Printing, are become common, and eaſie to be had, and moſt Families have ſome in them that can read*; *And therefore the publick Reading them is not now neceſſary.*

1. The plain Anſwer to this is, Firſt, That the Reading the Scriptures publickly is an *Inſtitution*

ſtitution of God: Therefore to lay it aſide on the account of the Invention of Printing, is in effect to ſay, That Men have found out a better way to propagate the Knowledge of *God's Word*, than He inſtituted; and plainly to lay aſide his *Command*, for *Men's own Inventions*.

2. *God* has promiſed that there ſhall be always *Religious Aſſemblies*, and has commanded his *Word* to be read in them, which is a certain means to preſerve the Knowledge thereof, as long as there is a Church; but he has no where promiſed the conſtant commonneſs of Bibles, nor ability to People to read them at home. To omit therefore the *Inſtitution of God for teaching his Word*, and to rely on Peoples procuring and reading Copies of the Bible privately, is to leave *God's* way, and preſumptuouſly depend on that which has no Promiſe annexed to it.

3. How eaſie ſoever we may imagine the obtaining Copies of the Bible, and notwithſtanding the number of thoſe that can read, there are ſtill many Families, even amongſt *Proteſtants*, that can neither compaſs a Bible, nor get any to read it, if they had one; and therefore this Expedient is no ways ſufficient to ſupply the Deſign of *God's Inſtitution*, in commanding it to be read publickly

4. Let us ſuppoſe Bibles to be as common as we can deſire, and that every one can read them

them, yet who will ſecure us that they will do it? People, whilſt the firſt Fervour of a Reformation is on them, may perhaps be diligent ſo long as the Scripture is a Novelty to them, or Zeal for a Party inſpirits them; but when this wears off, as it generally does in a little time, we ſee by experience that their care of Reading and Meditating in the Scriptures decays with it; and there are at this Day *too many* of all Parties that neither read themſelves nor hear one Chapter read in a whole Year, except at Church. And therefore to omit the publick Reading them, on preſumption that the People will do it themſelves, ſince it is ſo eaſie for them to do it, is the *ready way* to introduce an Univerſal Ignorance of *God's Word*, and reduce us again to *Popery*; the moſt effectual Bar againſt which, is the Bible in our own Language.

5. People may be obliged to come to the publick Congregations, and hear the *Word of God* read, though they have no inclination to it, and when they neglect, they may be reproved or puniſhed, but this is not practical when the Scriptures are required only to be read in private Families. Experience ſhews us that there is great difference between theſe two Methods in point of Efficacy. We ſee in *England* and *Wales*, where publick Reading was practiſed, the People generally embraced the Reformation, but in *Ireland*, where the

the ſame care was not taken, they rejected it. Had *God's Way* been taken, and the *Scriptures* as conſtantly read to the Native *Iriſh*, in a Language they underſtood, as it was in *England* or *Wales*, there is little doubt but the Reformation had ſucceeded as Univerſally here as it did there, but the want of this has kept them in ignorance *to this Day*, which may convince us how ineffectual all our Contrivances are to enlighten Men, in reſpect of *God's Inſtitution*. I am perſwaded that if ever the Native *Iriſh* be brought to the Knowledge of *God's Word* it muſt be by having it read to them publickly in a Language they underſtand, and not by thruſting Bibles privately into their Hands; of the ineffectualneſs of which, we have had an Experiment 150 Years.

6. But Laſtly, Inſtead of all other Arguments, None of us are ignorant, that the *Word of God* cannot be preſumed to have the ſame Efficacy when read privately, as it hath when read in the Aſſemblies of *Chriſtians*, according to God's appointment: Since he has given us a peculiar Promiſe to be preſent in ſuch Aſſemblies. And there are no diligent *Hearers of the Word* publickly read, but are able from their own experience to teſtifie, that they often find it to have a different force and efficacy, when they hear it read, as a part of his *Ordinance* in the Publick Aſſemblies

ſemblies, in which he has peculiarly promis'd his Preſence, than when they read it in private by themſelves.

The Third Pretence I have found alledged for omitting the regular *reading the Bible* in your Meetings, is, *That it takes up too much time, and is a hindrance to the more profitable Duty, of what you commonly call Preaching.*

1. I intreat you to conſider, That there is a time for every thing, and ſince *God* has appointed *reading* his *Word* a time and room in our Publick Aſſemblies, Who are we, that we ſhould preſume to throw it out? This ſurely is to ſet up our ſelves againſt *God*, and to think that we are able to order Things better for the Edification of his Church than he has done. Surely we ought rather to take care ſo to diſpoſe our Sermons, that they may not interfere with any other *Inſtitution* of *God*: But, that whatever time we allow them, there may remain ſufficient for *reading God's Holy Words*; Which I have proved is in Scripture Language *Preaching*; And therefore to juſtle this out to make our own Diſcourſes longer, is plainly to preferr our way of *Preaching* to *God's*. If there were a neceſſity that one or the other muſt be omitted, Modeſty ought to teach us to omit our own Words rather than God's.

2. Suppoſe that upon ſome Extraordinary Occaſion it may be *Lawful* to omit reading *God's*

God's Word in our Aſſemblies, that we may have the more time to manage a Diſcourſe for the *Inſtruction* of the *People*, yet it can never be juſtifiable to make this a common practice; which is to put a manifeſt Contempt on the *Word of God.*

A Fourth Pretence againſt reading the *Scriptures* publickly in a regular Method, is, *That they are hard to be underſtood, or applied, and therefore only ſo much of them ought to be read at a time as the Miniſter may explain and apply to his Auditory. And that one Verſe thus applied, is better than many Chapters read without ſuch Application.*

1. It is to be conſider'd, Firſt, That it is, againſt the general Opinion of the *Reformed Churches*, who univerſally teach, That the Scriptures are plain, in all things neceſſary to Salvation And therefore there is not that univerſal Neceſſity of an explanation of every place of Scripture that is to be read, as is pretended.

2. The *Holy Scriptures*, when heard with *Humility* and *Attention*, apply themſelves better than any Man can do it. The *Words* of them are the *Words of God*, and they have a *plainneſs*, *force*, and *ſpirit* in them, which no Humane Eloquence can improve, and therefore it is a great Affront to them to ſay that they have little efficacy except a Miniſter apply them.

3. Suppoſe one Verſe well applied to be better than many Chapters (for which there is no colour) yet this would not juſtifie the omiſſion of reading them publickly; for no *Application* can be ſo well made of them whilſt People are not thoroughly acquainted with them. It ought therefore to be our firſt care to read them to the *People* often and ſolemnly, that they may be acquainted with the whole Body of them, and then one word of *Application* may do more good than many Sermons to *People* not ſo prepared with the general knowledge of them.

The *literal* knowledge of the will of *God* muſt always go before the *ſaving*, and is the beſt *Introduction* to it. Now the reading the *Law* in the ears of the People is the means appointed by *God* to teach them that *literal* knowledge; and therefore while *your Teachers* have laid aſide this means of *God*'s *Appointment*, they have in a great meaſure debarred People of the *Spiritual* and *Saving* knowledge of his *Will*.

4 Fourthly, Reading a verſe or two, and truſting to the Miniſters *Application*, without the Peoples being acquainted with the whole Body of the Scriptures, does put Chriſtians too much in the power of their *Teachers*, and makes them liable to be ſeduced by them. This is the very Artifice whereby the *Romiſh* Prieſts keep their People in ignorance; and

your

your Teachers uſing the ſame Method (while it is manifeſt that ſo great a Part of their People either do not, or cannot, read them at home) ſeems too like a deſign on their *Hearers*, and tempts the World to ſuſpect that they are afraid of the naked ſimplicity of the Scriptures, ſince they dare not truſt their People with *Hearing* them *Publickly* read, except they add their own gloſſes to them.

The Fifth Pretence that I have met with for laying aſide the publick reading the *Word of God*, is, *That the dead Letter (as ſome call it) is a dull formal thing, without Spirit or Life, where it is not applied to the Souls of Men, by the Spirit of God ſpeaking in his Miniſters, and that without ſuch Aſſiſtance the Scriptures have little Efficacy on the Heart.*

I hope there are few of any Communion will own this Pretence, ſince it is ſo horrid a Reflection, and Affront on the *Word of God*. I will, however in anſwer to it, offer theſe following Conſiderations.

1. That the *Holy Scriptures* give a Character of themſelves very different from this. They repreſent the *Word of God* as *the Sword of the Spirit*, as *quick and powerful*, as *able to make a Man wiſe to Salvation*, as *giving wiſdom to the ſimple*, as *Converting the Soul*, with many other Expreſſions to denote the Efficacie thereof on the Hearts of Men; and therefore to reflect on the *Word*, as *dull* and *formal*,

formal, as a meer *dead Letter* that cannot engage the attention of the *Hearers,* or reach their *Hearts,* is too near Blaſphemy.

2. We are certain that *God* ſpeaks to us immediately by his *Holy Spirit* in his *Word*: And where *the Spirit of God is, there is Power.* But when Men ſpeak their own *Words,* or pretend to apply the *Words* or *Paſſages* of Scripture, tho' they ſeem to do it with the greateſt Zeal and Learning, yet they may be miſtaken; nay, they may deceive us: And therefore wholly to lay aſide the immediate Dictates of the *Holy Ghoſt* recorded in the Scriptures for any pretended *Explication* or *Application,* made by Men, is manifeſtly to exchange *God*'s undoubted Words and Command for what may be a meer *Humane Invention.*

3. 'Tis to be conſidered, that the people have always been apt to grow weary of the Service of *God* in the way of his own appointment, and complain of it, as dull and tedious, ſo *Mal.* 1. 13. *Ye ſaid alſo, what a wearineſs is it, and ye ſnuffed at it.* And the reaſon is becauſe the way of *God*'s appointing is always more Spiritual, in reſpect of that which is of Man's own *Invention,* and therefore it cannot be ſo eaſie or agreeable to the Carnal minds of Men.

4. It ought therefore to be conſidered by you, when people complain of being dull, and

and unaffected by meer *Hearing* the *Word of God* read, whether this do not truly proceed from a Carnal and Wicked Heart eſtranged from the *Spirit of God*, and whether the reaſon that Sermons pleaſe and affect more than a Chapter out of the *Bible* be not the novelty and outward Ornaments of them, rather than the Spiritualneſs of the diſcourſe. We are ſure St. *Paul* ſuppoſeth ſuch as are not affected with the *Words of God*, to be meer Natural, or Carnal Men, 1 *Cor.* 2. 13. where having taken Notice of ſpeaking, *Not in Words which Man's Wiſdom Teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt Teacheth*, he adds, *but the Natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: For they are fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know them, for they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* From whence it clearly follows, that the reaſon why Men do not underſtand or receive the things of *God* delivered to them in the *Words* of Scripture, dictated by the *Holy Ghoſt*, is, becauſe they are meer Natural Men, and want the *Spirit of God.* Whoever therefore is more affected, or delights more in a Sermon than in a Chapter of the *Bible*, has reaſon to look into his Heart, and examine himſelf whether he have the *Spirit of God.* Thoſe mentioned in Scripture that had that *Spirit* delighted in the *Law of God*: It was the Joy of their Hearts; they preferred it to all things, they *meditated in it day and night*:

And were ſo far from turning it out of their Publick Aſſemblies, that the *Hearing* it read was a great part of their Worſhip. Whoever therefore lays aſide this Practice, have reaſon to ſuſpect that they want that *Temper* and *Spirit* with which thoſe *Holy Men* were inſpired; and notwithſtanding all their Pretences to a more than ordinary Spiritualneſs and Reformation, are little advanced above the Natural Men that neither receive or reliſh the things of *God*, at leaſt not as they ought.

I find it alledged as a *Sixth Pretence* for not *Reading* the *Word of God* in your *Meetings*, *That a Child may read them, and perform this Duty; and then what need it take up the Miniſters time.*

To which there needs no other Anſwer then that the Service of God is not leſs his, or the leſs to be valued becauſe it is eaſie. On the contrary 'tis the more ſinful to neglect it, the more eaſie it is. Miniſters are not ſet apart for difficult things only, which others cannot perform; but they are to execute the Office that God has impoſed on them, whether it be eaſie or difficult. As for Example: God has Commanded his Miniſters to *Baptize, In the Name of the Father,* &c. Now to pour on Water in this *Form* is no ſuch difficult thing, but a Child, or any elſe might perform it; Neither is there any greater difficulty in the *Sacrament* of the

Lord's

Lord's Supper, as to the *Eſſentials* of it. Yet I ſuppoſe it will be granted by all, that it belongs only to the Miniſters Office to perform theſe, and that they muſt not delegate them, or any part of them to others, or omit them becauſe they are eaſie; and that they have a quite different Sacredneſs, Efficacy and Force, when performed by a Perſon Ordained and Authorized to this purpoſe, than when performed by another: and the ſame Rule holds in offering up our Prayers, and in *Reading* the *Scriptures:* A Man may read them at Home, a Child may read them in Church, but they have not the ſame aſſurance of Efficacy, and a Bleſſing, as when they come from the Mouth of a Perſon ſet apart by God's Ordinance for this purpoſe.

I make no doubt but the Experience (as I have ſaid) of moſt Chriſtians, from what they have felt in their own Hearts in *Hearing* the *Word of God* publickly *read*, will atteſt the Truth of this. Now if you, my Friends, know and own this, as I hope the generality of you do, you muſt ſee the unreaſonableneſs of this Pretence. If any of you do not know it, you muſt give me leave to ſay that I fear it is from ignorance, and not conſidering the *Scriptures*. And 'tis your *Teachers* Duty to inform you better. *Reading* the *Scripture* being allowed by their *Directory* to be a part of *God's* Publick Worſhip. We

have this Rule there in expreſs Words, *That it is requiſite that all the Canonical Books be read over in order, that the people may be better acquainted with the whole Body of Scriptures.* Now if you can ſhew but one Meeting in the laſt Age, in which this has been duly performed, we will not accuſe you ſo generally of violating *God*'s Command in this point; but if there be not one ſuch Meeting, you ought to conſider how you will excuſe your ſelves before God. And I think it neceſſary here to obſerve to you how inſignificant general Rules are without deſcending to a particular Determination of Circumſtances. Here we have in your *Directory* a general Rule (ſuch as it is) for *Reading* the Scripture, but for want of being particular, as the *Calendar* in our *Common-Prayer-Book* is, I queſtion if it yet was ever once obſerved, or indeed that it is *Practical* to obſerve it. And it is ſo almoſt in every other general Rule, and therefore to leave the Service of God to be Ordered by ſuch general Rules only, is in effect to *Teach* People to neglect it.

V. Theſe are all the *Reaſons* that I can poſſibly think of, or have heard urged for *Your* Practice in this Point. I will not ſay but others may be pretended, but I muſt profeſs that I do not remember to have met with them; if I had, I would have given them a due conſideration: I am perſwaded that they

they cannot be of greater force than thoſe I have examined. And that they can never excuſe *You* in this matter, from manifeſt Breach of *God*'s *Command*, in preferring *Men's Inventions* to his *Inſtitution*.

After all, I muſt profeſs to *You*, That I look on all theſe to be only Pretences; and that the true Reaſon of Men's Negligence in this *Duty*, is given us, 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. *For the time will come* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *when they will not endure ſound Doctrine; but after their own Luſts ſhall they heap up to themſelves Teachers, having itching Ears.* An *itching Ear* here, can ſignifie nothing ſo *properly*, as an Ear that loves *Novelty* and *Variety*: Becauſe therefore our Church gives the People little that is New, in her *Prayers*, or *Reading the Scriptures*, but retains a *Form of ſound Words*, in the one, and the plain *Word of God* in the other; Hence it is that ſome People cannot endure our Service, but heap up to themſelves *Teachers*, that inſtead of the *Praiſes*, *Prayers* and *Sermons* of *God's immediate Appointment*, will gratifie them every Meeting with a *New Prayer*, without troubling them with ſuch *Prayers* or *Sermons* as they think *old*; which are incomparably better, only the *Itching Ears of the People*, as the Apoſtle foretold, are pleaſed with the *Novelty* and *Variety* of the one, and diſguſt the *Repetition* of the

other, as the *Iſraelites* did that of *Angels Food*, *Pſal.* 78. 25. *Numb.* 21. 5. and 11. 6.

It is the Duty of all Miniſters, and the Buſineſs of the truely Conſcientious, to check and curb this Humour in the People; and notwithſtanding all Diſcouragements, the Miniſters of *Our Church*, inſtead of complying with them, have conſtantly reproved them for their Negligence and Levity, where they found them guilty. But as *Aaron*, to pleaſe the *Iraelites*, made the *Golden Calf*, ſo ſome *Miniſters* (tho' contrary to their own Principles) have changed *God's Inſtitution* to pleaſe *their People*; and left out the conſtant and regular Reading of *God's Word*, becauſe *their People* grew weary of it. But let all Men judge who behave themſelves moſt like *the Miniſters of Chriſt*; We, who keep to *the Reading God's Word*, according to *His own Inſtitution*, whether the People will hear or forbear; or, They that *comply with them*, and lay aſide *God's* Command to oblige and gain them.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of Bodily Worſhip.

SECT. I.

What the Holy Scriptures preſcribe concerning it.

I. THe Fourth Part of the Publick Worſhip of God, or Deſign of Religious Aſſemblies, is Viſible or *Bodily Adoration*; ſuch amongſt us are *Uncovering the Head*, *Bowing*, *Kneeling*, and other outward Signs of *Reverence* and *Submiſſion*, by which we openly acknowledge the *Mercy*, the *Juſtice*, and *Power* of *God*, and expreſs the inward ſence we have of theſe Attributes.

In treating of this Head, I will keep my ſelf to the ſame *Method*, as in the former, and conſider, Firſt, The *Rules* and *Examples* that the *Scriptures* afford us for the Performance of this Duty. Secondly, Compare the *Practice of Our Church* with them. Thirdly, Examine the *Diſſenters Practice*, and the *Reaſons* they alledge for it.

1. As to the firſt of theſe we find a *Poſitive Command* of *God*, for *Bodily Worſhip* in Publick, *Pſal.* 95. 6. *O come let us worſhip and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

The ſecond Verſe of this Pſalm plainly ſhews us, that this is meant of Publick Worſhip: *Let us come before his preſence with Thankſgiving.* And that this *bowing* or *kneeling* is to be Interpreted, *literally,* not *figuratively*, appears from the ſame Verſes, where *Singing, Thankſgiving,* and *Pſalms,* are all *literally* to be underſtood; and there is no more reaſon for underſtanding *bowing* and *kneeling* in a figurative ſence, than the other.

II. The ſame *Bodily Worſhip* is required by the Second Commandment, which forbids us to *bow down to a graven Image,* by which words we are commanded to *bow down* to God; for it is confeſſed by all, and laid down as a Rule by the Aſſemblies larger Catechiſm, *That the Negative Commandments include in them the contrary Poſitive*; that is to ſay, When a Commandment forbids us any thing, it requires us to perform the Duty contrary to what is forbidden. As for Example: When the firſt Commandment forbids us to *have any other Gods before the Lord,* it requires us to own and worſhip Him for our only God; and after the ſame manner all other Commands are to be interpreted. By which Rule, when the *Second Commandment, Exod.* 20. 5. forbids us in theſe Words, *Thou ſhalt not bow down to them, nor ſerve them,* it requires us to practiſe the contrary Duties in our Addreſſes to *God.* To *bow down to Him and ſerve Him,* that is,

to

to worſhip Him both with the worſhip of our *Bodies* and *Minds*: Therefore as he that either *bows* or *kneels*, or uſes *any poſture of Reverence* to a *graven Image*, breaks the Second Commandment; ſo doth he who on occaſion of *Publick Worſhip* either *refuſes* or *neglects* to uſe ſome ſuch *poſture* to *God*. It being a *Contempt of God*, and contrary to *His Commands*, to *Pray* to Him, for inſtance, without ſome Poſture of *Adoration* to Him, when we can do it, as well as it is a ſin to kneel to an *Image*, without *Praying* to it, which the *Papiſts* pretend to do; the one is *Idolatry*, and the other *Sacrilege*: For the Reaſon why we are not to bow down to an *Idol*, is, Becauſe 'tis an Act of *Worſhip* due to *God*. And whether we give what is due to him to an *Image*, or refuſe to pay it to Himſelf, we are equally Robbers of *God*, we deny him his *Honour*, and are guilty of *Sacrilege*.

I wiſh all concerned may ſeriouſly conſider, and amend their Practice in this particular.

III. But the Practice of *Holy Men*, and of *the Church of God* in Scripture, are the beſt Interpreters of *God's Commands*; and from them we may learn what he requires or approves in his *Worſhip*. Now through the whole *Old Teſtament*, we ſhall never find any one *ſitting* at his *Devotions*: But on all occaſions of *Worſhip*, eſpecially in *Publick Aſ-*

ſemblies

ſemblies, the *People of God* ſtood, kneeled, bowed, or proſtrated themſelves. 'Tis ſaid indeed, 2 *Sam.* 7. 8. That *King David then went and* ſat *before the Lord*: But here the Original Word is capable of *another ſignification*, and may as well be tranſlated, that he *remained*, *ſtayed*, or *abode* before the Lord; and accordingly it is thus tranſlated in other Places of Scripture, particularly *Gen.* 22. 5. & 24. 55. & 29. 19. 1 *Kings* 12. 2. This place therefore is no Exception againſt that practice which is ſo evident through the whole Old Teſtament, that *Holy Men* worſhiped God with their *Bodies*, as well as with their *Minds*.

IV. We ſhall find the ſame practiſed by our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles*, in the *New-Teſtament*. Our *Saviour* undoubtedly is the *Beſt Example* we can propoſe to our ſelves for the *worſhip of God*, and we ought to imitate what he did and approved. Now if we conſider the worſhip he offered to his Father, we ſhall find him addreſſing himſelf to him with *Bowing the Body, with Kneeling and Proſtration*, as well as with *ſtrong Cries and Tears*; ſo *Mat.* 26. 39. *And he went a little further, and fell on his Face, and prayed, O my Father*, &c. and *Luke* 22. 41. *He kneeled down and prayed.* And as he paid this Bodily Worſhip to God, ſo he accepted the ſame from Men when he was on Earth: Thus the Wiſe Men worſhiped him in his Cradle, *Mat.* 2. 11. *When they*

ſaw

ſaw the young Child, and his Mother Mary, they fell down, &c. Thus they that deſired to be Cured by him, addreſſed themſelves to him, *Mark* 5. 22. *When he ſaw him, he fell at his Feet, and beſought*, &c. And after the ſame manner, thoſe who were Cured by him returned him Thanks, *Luke* 17. 16. Thus his beloved *Mary* came into his preſence, *John* 11. 32. And *Matth.* 28. 9. *They held him by the Feet and worſhipped him.* Our Saviour looked on this Bodily Worſhip to be ſo indiſpenſibly his due, that he accepted of it from the very Devils, and they durſt not forbear to pay it to him, *Mark* 3. 11. *And unclean ſpirits, when they ſaw him, fell down before him, and cried, Thou art the Son of God.* And thus the very Heathen, as well as his Diſciples, approached him, even whilſt he was in his ſtate of Humiliation.

And that we may not be tempted to think, that our *Saviour* admitted this *Bodily Worſhip*, to be paid him only whilſt he was *Bodily* preſent, we may obſerve St. *Stephen* preſents his *Prayer* with the ſame poſture, *Acts* 7. 60. *He kneeled down and cryed with a loud Voice, Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge.*

V. The Scriptures repreſent to us the Firſt Chriſtians thus *glorifying God with their Bodies*, (as St. *Paul* expreſly commands us 1 *Cor.* 6. 20.) in the *Publick Aſſemblies*, as we may learn from 1 *Cor.* 14. 23. where the

Apoſtle

Apoſtle ſpeaking of a *Heathen* coming into the Aſſembly of Chriſtians, and being convinced, addeth, *and ſo falling down on his face he will Worſhip God.* If it had not been the cuſtom for Chriſtians to do thus, it would never have been expected from a Heathen, or reckoned an Argument of his Conviction. If the Church Triumphant in Heaven may be allowed a fit Pattern to us of what is decent in the *Worſhip of God,* we find them paying this *Bodily Worſhip to God, Rev.* 7. 11. *And all the Angels ſtood about the Throne, and about the Elders, and about the Beaſts, and fell on their Faces before the Throne, and Worſhipped God,* ſo *Chap.* 4. 10. and *Chap.* 19. 4. And the ſame we find practiſed by the Church on Earth, *Acts* 21. 5. where St. *Paul,* and the Church of *Tyre, kneeled down on the ſhore and prayed.* After the ſame manner he took his leave of the *Elders* of *Epheſus, Act.* 20. 36. *He kneeled down and prayed with them all.* So conſtantly are *Bodily Worſhip* and *Prayer* joined together, that *bowing the Knee,* ſometimes ſignifies *Prayer, Eph.* 3. 14. *For this cauſe I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

VI. The Scriptures repreſent this *Bodily Worſhip* as the moſt proper external Act of *Adoration*: If we look into the Scriptures we ſhall not find *Praying, Praiſing, Reading the Scriptures,* or *Adminiſtring* the *Sacraments,* termed

termed *Worſhip*; they are indeed *Duties* which we are obliged to perform to the Honour of *God*, but not immediate direct Acts of *Worſhip*, properly ſo called: For *Worſhip* is properly the ſubjection of our Minds to *God*; and that is a proper Act of *External Worſhip*, which directly ſignifies this ſubjection or ſubmiſſion of our Minds: But *Prayer* ſignifies our deſires of good things from *God*, and only indirectly our ſubjection to him; *Praiſes* immediately ſignifie the ſence we have of *God*'s Excellencies, and only by conſequence our ſubmiſſion; *Reading the Scriptures* is a means of *Inſtruction*, and tends to bring us to ſubmit to *God*, but does not directly expreſs it. And the *Sacraments* primarily ſignifie *God's Grace* to us, rather than our ſubmiſſion to Him. All theſe may in a large ſence, upon very good grounds, be look'd upon as parts of *Worſhip*, becauſe they do imply ſuch ſubmiſſion; but *bending* or *bowing* the *Body* is that which is properly in Scripture called *Worſhip*, as ſignifying immediately and naturally the *bending* and *ſubmiſſion* of our Souls, and nothing elſe.

In the *Old Teſtament* the Words rendered *Worſhip*, ſignifie properly and originally to *bow down or proſtrate the Body*. This is the proper ſignification of כרע and of שחה the latter of which in the *Second Commandment* is render'd to *bow down*, and very often when the

the Original has *they bowed down themſelves*, the Tranſlators render it *they Worſhiped*. So *Pſal.* 95. 5. and *Jer.* 1. 16. *And Worſhiped the work of their own hands.* In the Original 'tis, *They bowed themſelves down to the work*, &c. *Gen.* 24. 52. *He worſhipped the Lord, bowing himſelf to the Earth.* The Original has no more but *He bowed himſelf to the Earth to the Lord*, ſo *Pſal.* 95. 5. And the ſame holds generally through the whole *Old Teſtament*; from whence it follows that in the Opinion of our *Tranſlators* to *bow* ones ſelf to the *Earth*, is that proper Act which they call *Worſhip*. And hence the whole *Worſhip of God* is ſignified by *bowing before him*, *Micah* 6. 6. *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow my ſelf before the High God?* that is, *How ſhall I worſhip him acceptably?*

As to the *New Teſtament*, the Word generally there rendred *Worſhip*, properly ſignifies a *Bodily Action* προσκυνέω, is Originally to pay Homage by a Kiſs, as we now kiſs the King's Hand, which uſually was done *kneeling*; And hence *Kneeling* and *Worſhipping* ſignifie the ſame thing in the *New Teſtament*, and the one is put for the other. Thus *Mat.* 8. 2. *There came a Leper and worſhipped him.* The ſame Perſon is ſaid (*Mark* 1. 40.) to come, *beſeeching him and kneeling to him.* Of the *Canaanitiſh* Woman it is ſaid (*Mat.* 15. 25.) *That ſhe came and worſhiped him.* And *Mark* ſays

ſays (Chap. 7. 25.) *She came and fell at his Feet.* *Luke* ſays of the Man among the Tombs, that *he fell down before him* (Chap. 8. 28.) *Mark*, that *He worſhipped him*, (Chap. 5. 6.) Of *Jairus*, *Mark* and *Luke* ſay, that *He fell down at his Feet.* *Matthew*, that he *worſhipped him.* *Luke* 8. 40. *Mark* 5. 22. *Matth.* 9. 18. So promiſcuouſly do the Evangeliſts uſe the Words *kneeling*, or *falling down*, and *worſhipping*, to ſignifie the ſame thing. Whence we may learn that when any is ſaid to worſhip Chriſt viſibly, by it is meant they *kneeled to him.* And when we are Commanded to worſhip God in the Congregation, the meaning is, that we are required to expreſs the ſubmiſſion of our Minds by *bowing our ſelves*, or *kneeling unto him.* Hence the very Soldiers that in deriſion *bowed their knees* to Chriſt, are ſaid to Worſhip him, *Mark* 15. 19. And St. *John*, *Rev.* 22. 8. when he would Worſhip the Angel, *fell before his Feet*, to which the Angel replied, *See thou do it not* —— *Worſhip God.* From which Text it clearly follows, that *falling down* is an Act of Worſhip, and that we are commanded by the Mouth of an Angel to pay it to God.

VII. We find in Scripture ſome Act of this *Bodily Worſhip* accompanying every Religious Performance. Thus Prayers are generally offered with kneeling, and that ſo conſtantly

conſtantly (as is obſerved before) that to *bow the Knee*, in Scripture-Language, is to *pray*. Thus Praiſes, Thankſgivings, and Confeſſions of Faith, are offered *ſtanding*, 1 *King.* 8. 14. *And the King turned his Face about, and bleſſed all the Congregation of Iſrael (and all the Congregation of Iſrael ſtood) and he ſaid, Bleſſed be the Lord*, &c. the ſame poſture is obſerved, *Ver.* 55. 2 *Chron.* 20. 19. *And the Levites —— ſtood up to praiſe the Lord God of Iſrael with a loud voice*, 2 *Chron.* 29. 26. *Neh.* 10. 40. And this was not a voluntary Act, but impoſed on the People, as appears from *Neh.* 9. 5. *Then the Levites ——— ſaid, Stand up and bleſs the Lord your God*, &c. In conformity to which, the Saints and Angels in Heaven are repreſented to us thus praiſing God, *Rev.* 7. 9. *They ſtood before the Throne, and before the Lamb——— and cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Salvation*, &c. At Reading the Holy Scriptures, both Reader and People uſed the ſame poſture, as appears from *Neh.* 8. 4, 5. *And Ezra the Scribe ſtood on a Pulpit of Wood—— And Ezra opened the Book, and all the People ſtood up.* And *Chap.* 9. 3. *And they ſtood up in their place, and read in the Book:* Which our Saviour likewiſe obſerved, *Luke* 4. 16.

Laſtly, They offered their Sacrifices with Bodily Adoration, 2 *Chron.* 29. 27. *And when the Burnt-Offerings began, the Song of the*

the Lord began alſo ——*And all the Congregation worſhipped, and the Singers ſang, and the Trumpets ſounded*; and all this continued until the Burnt-Offering was finiſhed. The Word, as was obſerved, here rendred *Worſhipped*, ſignifies literally *they bowed themſelves down*, and the meaning is, They continued proſtrate, or kneeling, whilſt the Burnt Offering was offered. Thus in every *Religious* Performance, the Scripture has taken particular notice, and recorded to us, with what Acts of Bodily Worſhip it was offered up unto God.

SECT. II.

The Practice of Our Church in Bodily Worſhip.

LET us in the next place compare our own Practice with this Repreſentation, and ſee how we perform this part of viſible Worſhip in our Church.

I. Firſt then, when we come into the Publick Aſſemblies, we believe our ſelves to come into Chriſt's preſence; becauſe he has promiſed *Mat.* 18. 21. *Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midſt of them:* And therefore in Obedience to the Commands of God in Scripture; 'Tis our Cuſtom to lift up our Hearts to Him

in Prayer, and bow our Bodies before Him: This bowing our Bodies when we come into the Aſſembly of Chriſtians met together in Chriſt's Name, and for his Service, tho' it be not enjoined by any Conſtitution of our Church, is generally practis'd by good People, as very decent in it ſelf, and edifying to others. Our bowing our Bodies therefore at our coming into a Chriſtian Aſſembly for Worſhip, is only to pay that *Bodily Worſhip* to *God* that He requires from us when we come into his peculiar preſence, which preſence He has promiſed in ſuch Aſſemblies. Some indeed are ſo weak as to term our thus *worſhipping* God, a *bowing to the Altar*: whereas our Church expreſly declaring againſt any *Adoration* to be paid to the Conſecrated *Bread and Wine*, does much more declare againſt doing it to the *Altar*.

II. *Uncovering the Head* is a Mark of Reſpect amongſt us; and therefore we continue Uncovered whilſt the Aſſembly laſts; that is, whilſt we are in Chriſt's preſence. The Cuſtom of the Eaſtern Church was to *Uncover their Feet* in the preſence of *God*; ſo *Moſes* and *Joſhua* were commanded to do; (to which *Solomon* alludes, *Eccleſ.* 5. 1.) This was eaſily practiſed with them, becauſe they wore nothing on their Feet but *looſe Shoes* and *Sandals*, which were readily ſlipt off; And this continued till our Saviour's time, as appears

pears by their waſhing their Feet when they came into Houſes, *Luk.* 7. 44. *Uncovering the Head* is the ſame common mark of reſpect with us now as *uncovering the Feet* was with them in their time; and this *uncovering the Feet* being neither practicable with us, nor any note of reſpect among us, but rather the contrary, Our Church has requir'd us inſtead of it, to *uncover our Heads*, *Can.* 7.

For the Juſtification of this practice, give me leave to digreſs ſo far as to explain one paſſage in the New Teſtament, which ſeems to require that a Man ſhould have his *Head uncovered* in the preſence of *God*, not as a note of reſpect, but of Privilege, 1 *Cor.* 11. 7. *For a Man indeed ought not to cover his Head, foraſmuch as he is the Image and Glory of God; but the Woman is the Glory of the Man.* Which paſſage does not primarily relate to the covering the *Head*, but the *Face*, by a Veil, according to the Cuſtom of the *Eaſtern Countries*: and this *covering the Face*, was a note of reſpect, as the contrary was a Note of Privilege: So we find that when *Rebecca* was to appear before her Husband (*Gen.* 24. 65.) *She took a Veil and covered her ſelf.* So (*Exod.* 3. 6.) *Moſes hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God*; and *Elijah wrapped his face in his Mantle when he went out to meet God*, 1 *Kings* 19. 13. On the ſame Account the *Seraphims cover their faces with their Wings*, *Iſ.*

6. 2. 'Tis therefore a peculiar Privilege and favour to be allowed to appear before God *uncover'd*, and it is reckon'd as ſuch, 2. *Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, &c.* Thoſe that were out of favour might not appear bare-faced before their Prince, but with their *Heads covered*, as *Haman* was when the King ſignified his diſpleaſure againſt him. *Eſther* 7. 8. Now for the underſtanding of the before-cited place, we muſt conſider that *Man* being the *Image and Glory of God*, is allowed to take this Confidence before God, which is denied to *Women*: For ſince *God* was pleaſed to make *Man* his *Image and Glory*, it is not fit that this his glory ſhould be *covered* before Him: but on the other hand, it is fit that Man's glory, which is Woman, ſhould be *covered* before God. This I conceive is the full meaning of this place, and has no relation to the manner of *uncovering the Head* in uſe with us now; which is only a mark of civil reſpect, and that peculiar to Men, and not to Women. But however, being an honour paid to *Men*, there is no reaſon why it ſhould not be paid to *God*: On the contrary it ſeems to be required by the Apoſtle's general Injunction, *Let all things be done decently.* And it is one of the Articles of our Church, *That the Church has power to order Rites and Ceremonies*; that is, to determine what particular things come under

der the Apoſtle's general word of *Decency*.

3. We ſtand up at our *Praiſings*, *Thankſgivings*, and *Confeſſions of Faith*, in Conformity to the Examples of Holy Scripture.

4. At our Confeſſions of Sin, and at our Prayers, we preſent our ſelves before God on our knees, by order of our Church, according to the Example of our Saviour, and the Church of God.

III. We Celebrate the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Chriſt in a *Worſhipping* poſture. I know that many except againſt this. It would engage me in a longer diſcourſe to examine it fully; perhaps God may hereafter give me an Opportunity to diſcuſs it at large, at preſent I ſhall only hint at the Scripture-Grounds we have for it, and that by the following deduction.

1. The *Altar* was of Old the *Lord's Table*, from whence his Attendants were fed, *Mal.* 1. 7. *Ye offer polluted Bread upon mine Altar, and ye ſay, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye ſay, The Table of the Lord is contemptible.*

The Author's Intention is not to aſſert, That the Scriptures require *Kneeling* at the *Lord's Supper*, but to ſhew, That it is not contrary to the *Inſtitution* of Chriſt, or *Practice* of the Apoſtles, who compare our receiving it with the *Jews partaking of their Altar*, to which they approached with *Adoration*.

2. On this account the *Iſraelites* came to the *Altar*, and worſhipped before it, as being *God's Table*, on which the Sacrifice was preſented, as his Meat, of which they were permitted to partake: So 2 *Chron.* 6. 12. *And he ſtood before the Altar of the Lord* — verſ. 13. *And kneeled down on his knees.* And 1 *Kings* 8. 54. *He aroſe from before the Altar from kneeling on his knees,* Nor can it be ſaid, That this kneeling of *Solomon* was only becauſe he offered up a Prayer at that time, and that therefore he was in a praying poſture; for undoubtedly it was the Duty of all that were preſent at any Sacrifice, to offer up Prayers to *God* with the Sacrifice: And accordingly we find it commanded 2 *Kings* 18. 22. *Ye ſhall worſhip before this Altar in Jeruſalem*; literaliy, *Ye ſhall bow down your ſelves.*

3. The *Communion-Table* is called the *Lord's-Table*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 21.

4. The *Iſraelites* partaking of the *Altar* is propoſed as an Example for our partaking of the *Lord's-Table*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16 *The Cup of Bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt?* —— verſ. 18. *Behold Iſrael after the Fleſh: Are not they which eat of the Sacrifices partakers of the Altar?*

5. In alluſion to this Religious Eating with *Bodily Worſhip*, it is Propheſied of our Savi-

our,

our, *Pſal.* 22. 29. *All they that be fat upon Earth* (that is, the favoured and happy Servants of God here; called in *verſ.* 26. *The Meek*) *ſhall Eat and Worſhip.*

Since then the Scripture ſets forth to us a Religious Eating at the *Lord's Table* with *Worſhip*, and the *Holy Communion* is ſuch an Eating at his *Table*, it follows that the Scripture Warrants our *Worſhipping* when we Eat.

2. We are Commanded in Scripture to receive the Holy Eucharift *In remembrance of Chriſt's death, and by it we ſhew his death till he come.* The ſame Scriptures Command us to Worſhip our Saviour; *For he is the Lord, and Worſhip thou him, Pſ.* 45. 11. If ever then we are to Worſhip our Saviour, it is certainly when we come to him in the neareſt Approaches that we are capable of in this World, and with the higheſt ſence of Gratitude that our Souls can admit of; to remember and adore him for the greateſt Act of Love that could be extended towards us, even laying down his Life for us, and partake of the Benefits thereof by feeding on him. If it be not our Duty to Worſhip him with our Bodies, as well as our Minds, on this occaſion, it is hard to ſay when we are obliged to do it.

This Conſideration prevail'd with the Proteſtant Church of *Poland*, to oblige all their Members to receive *kneeling* or *ſtanding*,

in Oppoſition to the *Socinians*, who refuſed to pay any Worſhip to our Saviour; and therefore Celebrated his Supper ſitting. The Words of their general *Synod* are theſe, (*Corpus Confeſſion.* p. 236.) *Quod attinet ad Ceremonias, &c.* " As to the Ceremonies of " the Lord's-Supper, the Decree ſometime " ago diſcuſs'd in the *Synod* of *Sandomir*, " and the Concluſion made and repeated " in the general *Synod* of *Cracow* and *Pe-* " *trokow*, is alſo approved in this Seſſion of " the *Synod* of *Uladiſlaw*, *viz.* That ſitting " at the Lord's-Table ſhall not be uſed in " any of the Churches of *Poland* or *Lithua-* " *nia*, *&c.* of our Communion: For this " Ceremony (tho' indifferent as others are) " is not uſed by the Chriſtian and Refor- " med Churches; and is proper to the Infi- " del *Arians* only, who place themſelves in " an equal Throne with the Lord. Since " then *ſitting* has crept into ſome of our " Churches, chiefly by the occaſion and " countenance of thoſe who have miſerably " fallen from us, and denyed the Lord that " bought us, We intreat and exhort all thoſe " Congregations, and our Brethren in the " Lord, that they would change *ſitting* in- " to the Ceremonies uſed by us Proteſtants " in all the Reformed Churches of *Europe*, " even that the Lord's Supper may be admi- " niſtred to the Communicants ſtanding or

" kneeling

" kneeling (with a Proteſtation againſt " *Bread-Worſhip* uſed by the Papiſts) both " which Rites (as they have been hitherto " uſed in ſome Churches) we leave free, " and approve; without blaming or giving " Offence to thoſe who uſe either. This *Synod* was held *June* the 19th. 1583.

The *Synod* of *Petrokow*, above-mention'd (held *June* 1, 2, 3. 1578. *pa.* 234.) expreſſes it ſelf in theſe Words; " Becauſe thoſe " Traiterous Fugitives from us to *Arianiſm*, " who change all things in the Church, pre- " tending to imitate Chriſt without Diſcre- " tion, were the firſt Authors amongſt us of " *Sitting at the Lord's Table*; contrary to the " Rites uſed in all the Reformed Churches " throughout *Europe*. Therefore we reject " this Ceremony, as proper to them who " treat as well Chriſt as his Sacraments irre- " verently, as Indecent and Irreligious, and " very offenſive to well-meaning People.

It ought to be obſerved, That this Church reckons *Sitting* a *Ceremony*; and a *Ceremony* of an ill Signification and Original, and not uſed by any Proteſtant Church in their Time.

IV. But I find moſt People acknowledge the Reaſonableneſs of this; and grant, if it were left to us how we would *Receive*, that we ought to do it with Adoration: But, ſay they, *Obedience is better than Sacrifice*; we are com-

manded

manded to do what Chriſt did, and he inſtituted, and his Diſciples received it, in a Table-poſture; and therefore ſo ought we, notwithſtanding the Scriptures, Reaſon, and Decency, ſeem to recommend another Poſture to us.

Now to this Argument, which is the only one I find brought from Scripture, and which ſeems to prevail with moſt, I Anſwer,

1. That we are not required, nor is it convenient to imitate all that Chriſt did. Neither the Time, nor the Number of Receivers, nor the Poſture, being Obligatory to us; as appears from St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. who having occaſion to mention *what he received of the Lord*, concerning this Sacrament, mentions only our Saviour's *taking Bread*, *giving Thanks*, and *Breaking it*; and then ſaying, *Take*, *Eat*; *this is my Body*, &c. without the Circumſtances of the Number of Receivers, his Poſture, or being at Supper. Nay, that we may not think that this had any relation to a Common Supper, or the Circumſtances of it, he obſerves, that *Supper was done*, *when he took the Cup*. Our Saviour's Poſture therefore, whatever it was, is no wiſe Obligatory to us, it not being any part of what St. *Paul* profeſſes to have received from Chriſt concerning this Sacrament.

2. I have already proved, that Religious Eating was accompanied with *Bodily Worſhip*; and

and therefore if it were granted, that we were obliged to receive this Sacrament in a Table-Poſture, from the Example of our Saviour; yet it would not follow, that we ſhould not receive it Kneeling. 'Tis certain our Saviour did not *Sit*, but *Lie* at Table, when he did eat his uſual Meals. Suppoſe then he had obliged us to his Poſture of Eating, we ought to Lie, as he did; but none aſſert the Neceſſity of our doing ſo, or Practiſe this way. Since then all Parties change it, ſure we do better, that change it into the Religious way of Eating, recommended to us in the Scriptures, with Adoration, than others, that change our Saviour's way into Sitting, the Common way of our Eating.

3. We have this further to ſay for our Practice, That our Saviour was not at a Common Supper when he inſtituted this Sacrament, but at the Paſſover; which was a Sacramental Eating, and had a peculiar poſture preſcribed for it, *Exod.* 12. 11 And though ſome think (but without Warrant from Scripture) that the *Jews* did not obſerve this, yet it is owned they obſerved another, which differed from the Common Poſture of Eating, and was reckoned Religious. However, 'tis ſpoken, that our Saviour performed this Eating with ſeveral Religious Ceremonies that were not in the firſt Inſtitution:

Inſtitution: Such is that we find, *Luke* 22. 17. *And He took the Cup, and gave thanks, and ſaid, Take this, and divide it among your ſelves.* This *Cup* is different from the Sacramental *Cup*, which is inſtituted *ver.* 20. And therefore if we would imitate Chriſt, we ought to eat the *Lord's-Supper* in a way peculiar to it ſelf, and different from our Common Meals.

4. But Fourthly, The full Anſwer to the Argument, is, That it goes on a falſe Suppoſition, That our Saviour inſtituted this Sacrament in the Common Poſture of Eating. Which no wiſe appears in Scripture; neither can it be inferred from any thing ſaid or intimated by the Evangeliſts, or St. *Paul*, but rather the contrary. It's true, whil'ſt the Diſciples, were Eating, *he took Bread*; but after that, *he gave Thanks*, and *bleſſed it*; and then *he brake it*, and *gave it to them*: And it is not to be ſuppoſed that the Diſciples continued Eating, whil'ſt our Saviour was giving Thanks, and Bleſſing; that is, Praying. Our Saviour therefore, or his Diſciples, were not Eating, but giving Thanks, and Praying, whil'ſt this Sacrament was inſtituted; and therefore it was proper to be done (and, in probability, was done by our Saviour) in a Thankſgiving and Praying Poſture. Neither was there any neceſſity to take notice of this Change of Poſture; ſince the Change of the Action, from *Eating*, to *Thankſgiving* and *Bleſſing*,

Bleſſing, ſufficiently ſignifies and inferrs it. There is no notice taken of our Saviour's Riſing at all from the Table, by any of the three *Evangeliſts* that deliver to us the *Inſtitution* of the Sacrament; and yet it is plain, from *John* 13. 4. that he did Riſe from that Supper, and *waſhed his Diſciples Feet*, and *ſat down again*, ver. 12. and ſo he might Riſe to Bleſs and Diſtribute the Holy Sacrament: And therefore we have no Aſſurance from Scripture, that *our Saviour inſtituted this Sacrament in a Common Table-poſture*, rather the *Contrary* ſeems probable. So that He has left us at liberty to follow the general Rules of Decency and Reaſon, and what the *Scriptures* repreſent to us as fit, and practiſed in the like Caſes.

Laſtly, We find the *Apoſtle* ſeverely reproving the *Corinthians*, for their Irreverence in *Receiving* this *Sacrament*; and threatning them with *Damnation*, for not *diſcerning the Lord's Body*; that is, for Receiving it as their *Common Food*, without diſtinguiſhing between them by a Reverend and Religious Receiving it. And ſure it is but a due *Diſtinction* between *It* and our *Common Food*, to approach the *Lord's-Table* with as much Reverence as the Jews did their *Altar*, at which they never ſat down.

Upon the whole, I think we do nothing in this, or any other Sacred Action, as to

Bodily

Bodily Worſhip, but what is Warranted and Grounded on the *Holy Scriptures*; and particularly as to what we do at the *Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,* it is as unjuſt to ſuſpect or accuſe us of Worſhipping the *Lord's-Table,* or the Elements of *Bread* and *Wine,* becauſe we receive them Kneeling, as it were to accuſe the Jews of Worſhipping their *Altar* or *Sacrifices,* becauſe they Worſhipped before them, as God Commanded them to do, 2 *King.* 18. 22. I beſeech God to give us true *Submiſſion* and *Humility of Heart*; for the Outward Expreſſions of theſe Inward *Diſpoſitions* of *Mind* which our *Church* has appointed by *Bodily Worſhip,* are certainly ſuch as *God* has *approved,* and holy Men have *practiſed* in *Scripture.*

SECT. III.

The Practiſe of the Diſſenters in Bodily Worſhip.

I. AND now I come to you, my *Friends,* who *diſſent* from Us, to conſider how You perform *This part of God's Worſhip,* and to compare *Your Principles* and *Practiſes* with what I have repreſented from the *Holy Scriptures.*

And, Firſt, As to *Your Principles.* I need not tell *you,* That *you do not allow Bodily Adoration*

ration to be any part of God's Worſhip: Which *you* cannot but diſcern to be plainly contrary to the *Holy Scriptures*, that make it the *moſt proper* peculiar Act thereof, as I have ſhewed before, *Chap.* IV. *Sect.* 1. *N°.* 1, 2, 3. In your Confeſſion of Faith, *Chap.* 21. Prayer, Reading Scriptures, *&c.* Singing Pſalms, Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, are reckon'd up as Parts of Religious Worſhip, but not a Word concerning the Worſhip of the Body. Your *Directory* doth not only *leave it out*, but *excludes* it, by requiring all to enter the Aſſembly, and *to take their Seats and Places, without Adoration, or bowing themſelves towards one Place or other*; that is, without Bowing themſelves at all. A Rule directly oppoſite to Natural Reaſon, as well as to the Commands of *God*, and to the Examples of his *Saints*: And 'tis unconceivable how it ſhould be laid down by a Society of Men that profeſſed to believe Chriſt peculiarly preſent in their Aſſemblies; which yet the Authors of your *Directory* profeſs to do, in that very place where they forbid all Adoration. Let us then, I pray you, compare their Rule with God's Word: You have the Bible in your hands, and you look upon it to be your Privilege to uſe it: The *Scriptures* ſay, *O come, let us worſhip, let us bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* Your *Directory* ſays, *Let us enter the Aſſembly without*

without Adoration or Bowing. Where notwithſtanding, it allows, that we in a *ſpecial manner appear in God's Preſence.* Surely *you* cannot but ſee, this is not only to lay aſide, but to contradict the Rules of *Scripture.*

II. Your *Practice* is conformable to your *Principles,* For,

1. At your Thankſgivings or Praiſes, you neither Bow, nor Stand up.

2. Whereas We, and the Churches of God in all Ages, have uſed to Stand up at the Solemn Confeſſions of Faith, you have caſt out of your Religious Aſſemblies, not only *this Act of Worſhip,* but the *Confeſſions of Faith themſelves*; ſo material a Part of the Service of God, as appears from *Rom.* 10. 9. 10. *If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy Mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine Heart that God hath raiſed him from the Dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved: For with the Heart Man believes unto Righteouſneſs, and with the Mouth Confeſſion is made unto Salvation.* To profeſs ſolemnly that we expect no Happineſs but from the good Pleaſure of God, and that we freely acquieſce in his Proviſions for us, is no ſmall Evidence of the Submiſſion of our Minds to God; and, upon that Account, may be reckoned an Inſtance of External Worſhip, and accordingly many of the *Pſalms* contain ſuch Confeſſions.

3. You Sit, generally, at your Publick Prayers.

4. At

4. At the Holy Sacrament you Sit, not only whilſt you Receive, but likewiſe at the Thankſgiving and Bleſſing before: And your *Directory* impoſes this Poſture on Communicants, though contrary to *Holy Scripture*, in reſpect of that Part that concerns the Prayer and Thankſgiving; and without any *Command*, or ſo much as *Example* from Scripture, in reſpect of the Sitting at the time of Receiving.

5. Too many of your Perſwaſion condemn us, who conform to God's Word, in theſe Particulars, as guilty of *Superſtition*; and endeavour to render our Conformity ridiculous; not being content to lay aſide the *Commands of God* themſelves, but endeavouring likewiſe to *condemn* and *ſcoff* at the Obſervation of them in *Us*.

In ſhort, I entreat you to conſider, That you have *not any one Viſible Act of Adoration amongſt you, in your Aſſemblies*, except we reckon in this Number, That your Men *Uncover their Heads* at Prayer; and yet even this is not required by your *Directory*.

III. And now let me a while Examine calmly with you, the Pretences I have met with, for laying aſide this Part of *God's Worſhip*; for it is not probable that any would baniſh *Adoration* out of their Aſſemblies, and alledge no Reaſon for their doing ſo.

1. Firſt therefore, I find that Place of Scripture produced to this purpoſe, *Joh.*4.24. *God is a Spirit; and they that worſhip Him, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth.* Some think that all *Bodily Worſhip* is here forbidden, and that only the *Worſhip* of the *Spirit* or *Mind* is required of us under the *Goſpel*: Upon this, ſome have declared againſt all *Churches*, or ſeparate Places for Worſhip; Others, againſt all *Bodily Worſhip*; Others, againſt all *Sacraments*; Others, againſt all *Vocal Prayers*, *Praiſes* and *Thankſgivings*: And even in the Apoſtle's time, ſome were againſt all *Viſible Aſſemblies*. And indeed, if we underſtand this Place as ſome do, That all *Bodily Worſhip* is excluded by it, and that it is ſufficient to *Worſhip God* in our *Spirits* or *Minds* only, I do not ſee but all theſe are in the right; and thoſe who pretend to be above Ordinances, and *worſhip God no-where*, are *moſt conformable to this Rule*; and, next to them, the *ſilent Meetings* of the *Quakers*, without *Sacraments*, without *Vocal Prayers* or *Praiſes*, are the moſt *Spiritual Service*. For if *other Diſſenters* think *Bodily Worſhip*, ſuch as *Bowing*, *Kneeling*, &c. *unlawful* or *unneceſſary*, becauſe they are Acts of the Body, and unfit, on that account, to be offered to *God*, who is a *Spirit*; why may not the *Quakers* omit the *Sacraments*, and the *Words of the Mouth*, which are *Outward Things* as well as the other? Nay, why ſhould not

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Outward Teaching or Preaching ceaſe? ſince the *Spirit* is a ſufficient Teacher, and has promiſed us, *Heb.* 8. 10. *I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts.*—— Ver. 11. *And they ſhall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother*, &c. The Principle and Reaſoning is the ſame in all theſe, and will juſtifie the *Silent Meetings* of the *Quakers*; nay, the Extravagance of *Thoſe* that pretend to be *above all Ordinances*, as well as the Irreverence of *other Diſſenters.*

But we ought to interpret Scripture ſo as *one place* may not contradict *another*; and ſince the *Holy Scriptures* ſhew us, that *God* requires our *Vocal Prayers* and *Praiſes*, our *Viſible Sacraments* and *Adoration*, we ought not to interpret *Worſhipping in the Spirit* ſo as to exclude theſe, but rather conclude that they may be offered up to *God* in ſuch a manner as to become proper for *Spiritual Worſhip*, or *God* would never have required them.

When therefore our Saviour repreſents the *Worſhip* He taught the *World*, as a *Worſhip in Spirit and Truth*, his meaning doubtleſs is not to exempt us from *worſhipping his Father* with our *Bodies*, whereof He Himſelf has given us an Example; but to teach us, That the *Outward Acts of Worſhip* that we pay to *God*, are only Acceptable to Him, when they proceed from, and are accompanyed with a hearty *ſubmiſſion of our Souls*; and that every Act

is more or leſs Acceptable, as it has more or leſs of our Hearts and Affections in it: But that Circumſtances of Place, and the like, give us no Advantage, and are of no value towards making our *Worſhip* Acceptable.

This meaning of the Words directly anſwers our *Saviour*'s deſign, which was to ſhew the *Samaritan* Woman that the time was coming that the *Worſhip* offered to *God* under the *Goſpel* would be nothing more acceptable for being offered at *Jeruſalem*, or *Mount Gerizim*, or any other place: But the Heart being right, all Places were alike. Which was directly contrary to the *Jewiſh Law*, that allowed no *Sacrifice* or *Oblation* to be acceptable to *God*, that was not offered at the *Temple*, and conſequently their *Worſhip* derived its acceptance from the Place, and not from the Heart alone of him that offered it.

We affirm therefore, as our *Saviour* has here taught us, that it is only from the *Heart*, or *Spirit*, that our *Worſhip* becomes acceptable to *God*, and that the time or place where it is offered contributes nothing to our acceptance: But that in whatever place, at whatever time, in whatſoever poſture we offer up our *Spirits* and *Hearts* to *God*, we are accepted by him.

But then we ſay likewiſe, a Man who neglects the Aſſemblies of Chriſtians, cannot have

have a good *Heart* towards *God*, becauſe he breaks his Command; that ſuch as do not take care to provide a convenient and decent place, and ſet it apart for Chriſtians to meet, and to perform *God's Worſhip* in, cannot have a value for it; that ſuch as neglect the *Holy Sacraments*, want *Faith* in His Promiſes, as well as *Obedience* to His Commands; and that thoſe who neglect to *Worſhip* him with their *Body*, and to pay outward Reverence and Adoration when they come into his preſence muſt want inward ſubmiſſion of their Minds, becauſe they do not approach as he requires. If a Man truly *Worſhip God* in his *Spirit*, it will oblige him, if able, to perfom theſe outward Acts; and if he be not able, *God* doth not require them.

It is in this, as in Faith, *Jam.* 2. 18. *A Man may ſay, Thou haſt Faith, and I have Works: Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will ſhew thee my Faith by my Works.* After the ſame manner a Man may ſay, Thou *Worſhippeſt God* inwardly in *Heart* and *Spirit*, and I *Worſhip* him outwardly, and in the face of the Church with my *Body*. Shew me thy inward *Worſhip* without *bowing*, *kneeling*, or other *Bodily* Act of *Worſhip*, and I will ſhew thee my inward *Worſhip*, and dread of *God's* Majeſty by the *Worſhip* of my *Body*.

From all which it is manifeſt, that our *Obligation* to *worſhip God* in *Spirit* and *Truth*,

doth no more exclude *Bodily Worſhip*, than *Faith* does exclude *Works*.

2. The ſecond Pretence I have heard for baniſhing of *Bodily Adoration* is much like the firſt. It is alledged, *That God has no value for it; and that if our Hearts are humble and right with God, no matter whether we ſignifie it by outward Acts of Adoration or no.*

But to this I anſwer,

1. That *God* himſelf is the beſt Judge of what befits his Majeſty, and 'tis a ſure ſign that he valueth a thing when he requires it; ſince therefore he has Commanded us to render him this *Bodily Worſhip*; for us to alledge, *That He doth not value it*, is too like ſetting up our own Wiſdom above His.

2. The Words of our *Prayers*, or *Praiſes*, and all the *Fruits of our Lips*, are outward things, as well as the geſtures of our *Bodies*, and *God* values them as little as our proſtrating our *Bodies* before him, when the *Heart* goes not along with them, as appears from *Iſ.* 1. where he ſhews his *Abhorrence*, not only of *Sacrifices*, *Feaſts* and *ſpreading forth Hands*, but likewiſe of *Prayers*, *verſ.* 4. And *Mark* 7. 6. *This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me, howbeit in vain do they Worſhip me*, &c. Yet to throw *Vocal Prayers* and *Praiſes* out of the ſervice of *God*, were abſolutely to deſtroy His *Viſible Worſhip*; and after the ſame manner to throw out all

Outward

Outward Signs of Reverence, ſuch as *kneeling*, &c. is a fair Step to it. For the ſame *God* that has ſworn, *That every Tongue ſhall confeſs unto him*, has likewiſe ſworn, *That every knee ſhall bow unto him*, *Rom.* 14. 11. Both therefore are alike required in the *Worſhip* of *God*, and both alike inſignificant when ſeparated from the ſincere concurrence of our *Hearts*. When the Meditations of our *Hearts* go along with the Words of our Mouths, they are acceptable to *God*; and when the ſubmiſſion of our Souls goes along with the *Worſhip* of our *Bodies*, it is grateful to him, and valuable in his ſight, as all other Acts of *Obedience* are.

3. Tho' *Bodily Worſhip* in it ſelf were a ſmall thing, yet the omiſſion of it may be a great and crying Sin, and a great Contempt of *Almighty God*. Thus eating the *forbidden Fruit* was in it ſelf a very inconſiderable *Outward Action*, and yet being *forbidden*, it was the Ruine of all *Mankind*. Thus the waſhing a Man with Water, *In the Name of the Father, Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, is in it ſelf no great matter, yet the *wilfull omiſſion* of it is acknowledged by *moſt* to be *damnable*. Thus *kneeling*, or *ſtanding* at our *Prayers*, is but a Circumſtance, yet ſince *God* has required it, and *Holy Men* recommended it by their Example, to omit it wilfully may be a great ſin, and render our beſt meant *Prayers* ineffectual. Much more muſt it be ſinful to condemn, or

mock at thoſe who practiſe it according to *God's* Inſtitution.

4. As ſmall a value as you think God has for Outward performances, yet it is plain, that you lay great weight upon the doing, or not doing of them. In caſes of neceſſity we think they may be lawfully omitted; but you are Taught that in no caſes they may be lawfully practiſed. You are Taught rather to ſtay at Home, and not to *Worſhip God* at all *Publickly*, than to conform in Outward Geſtures, or Circumſtances. You are adviſed rather to abſtain all your Lives from the *Lord's-Supper* than receive it *Kneeling*. Now if you think *God* does hate them ſo much, upon ſuppoſition that he has not required them, and accounts them a polluting of his Ordinance; How muſt it diſpleaſe him to omit them, if it appears that He has Commanded them, as I think I have made ſufficiently plain?

5. I intreat you, my Friends, to conſider That whatever *Bodily Worſhip* be in it ſelf, yet to throw it out of Our *Publick Aſſemblies* is of fatal conſequence, ſince it doth in a great meaſure defeat the deſign of them. The great deſign of *Publick Worſhip* is, Firſt, To ſignify, and Teſtify to the *World*, the Senſe and Belief we have of the *Being*, *Power* and *Providence* of *God*, *To declare his Name to our Brethren, and in the midſt of the Church to ſing Praiſe unto him*

him, *Heb.* 2. 12. And Secondly to be a means to beget, ſtir up, and preſerve this ſence and belief in one another, *Heb.* 10. 25. To both theſe ends, *Bodily* and *External Worſhip* do very much contribute; and 'tis hardly poſſible to attain either of them without it. For we cannot ſee into one anothers *Hearts*, and therefore we muſt ſignifie our ſence and belief of *God* in the *Publick Aſſemblies*, either by *Words* or *Actions*, and if poſſible, by ſuch as are peculiarly appointed by *God* to this purpoſe. But in your *Meetings* there is no Obligation on any one to ſignifie his Concurrence with the Congregation in any Ordinary Act of *Worſhip*, either by Word or Geſture, and therefore this end of *Publick Aſſemblies* is utterly defeated by you. Your *Directory* does not require, or allow the People ſo much as to ſignifie their aſſent by adding an *Amen* to the *Prayers* or *Thankſgivings* there offered: But on the contray, you ridicule thoſe that practiſe it purſuant to the Directions and Examples in Scripture. And as to Geſtures, ſuch as *kneeling*, *ſtanding*, or *bowing the Body*, &c. you condemn them all as Relicts of *Idolatry*, or *Superſtition*. There remains therefore in your Aſſemblies nothing whereby the People may teſtifie their Belief, or aſſent to what they hear, which was one deſign of the *Meeting*. Thus by turning all *Bodily Worſhip* out of your *Aſſemblies*, you have made void this

this great end of them, and left no viſible diſtinction whereby any one may ſignifie whether he aſſents to the *Worſhip* that is offered, or diſſents from it. The whole *Aſſembly* being to one another meer *Spectators* and *Hearers*, not *Joint-Worſhippers*.

As to the other end of *Publick Worſhip*, which is to keep alive, and ſtir up our Affections; you cannot but own that the omiſſion of this outward *Worſhip* is a great hindrance to it. For it muſt needs be a great check to *Devotion* to ſee a Man come into the preſence of *God* in a *Chriſtian Aſſembly*, with leſs Reverence, or ſhew of reſpect, than into the preſence of an Ordinary Superior; and behave himſelf leſs civilly there, than he would do in a *Court of Juſtice*. And let people pretend what they will, That can never be ſuitable *Worſhip* to *God*, which would be rudeneſs to a *Judge*. And therefore the *Quakers* act much more reaſonably, who refuſe to take off their *Hats*, or pay *Bodily Worſhip* to *Men*, than other *Diſſenters*, who pay it to *Men*, and refuſe it to *God*. For to do ſo, muſt naturally tend to diſtinguiſh the awe and ſenſe we ought to have of His Majeſty, and the belief of his peculiar preſence in our *Aſſemblies*, and it is much to be feared, that this proceeds too often from the want of ſuch awe.

6. To

6. To conclude, There is a Language of Geſtures rather more ſignificant and moving than that of the Tongue; and he muſt have a peculiar make of Mind, that is not more awakened and affected by ſeeing a *whole Congregation on their Knees,* with their *Hands* and *Eyes* lift up to *Heaven*; than to ſee them ſitting or leaning, whilſt their Petitions are offering up to *God.* Words therefore and Geſtures being only different parts of the Language whereby we expreſs and communicate our *Thoughts* and *Affections* to *one another,* and *Both* being *recommended to us* by *Nature,* and *Commanded* by *Scripture,* to be uſed in the *Worſhip of God,* he who lays aſide *Geſtures,* does ſin againſt the *Commandment of God,* as well as he that lays aſide *Words.* I heartily wiſh *You,* and all *Diſſenters,* wou'd conſider this: VVhich if *you did,* I aſſure my ſelf *you* would perceive this to be *a Matter of ſome moment*; and neither *condemn our Bodily Adorations,* nor *continue your own* (what I muſt call) *Irreverence,*

3. But, Thirdly, Some alledge, for their omitting this Part of *God's Worſhip, That they do not condemn Bodily Adoration in his Service; but that to Stand up and Kneel in the Congregation, is ſo troubleſom to them, that they judge they are better omitted.*

To which I Anſwer, That I verily believe that theſe Perſons do give the true Reaſon of

of this Practice. For, as it has been ſhewn before, 'twas of old the Reaſon of People's Neglecting *God*'s *Service*, and Matter of their Complaint againſt it, That *it was a wearineſs*, Mal. 1. 13. But ſure, 'tis no leſs a Sin, to lay aſide the *Commandments of God*, for our *Eaſe*, than to change them for the *Traditions of Men*. 'Tis an Effect of our Natural Corruption, to deſire to ſerve God with that which *coſts us nothing*, and without trouble; and moſt are willing to ſave their *Pains*, as well as their *Money*, in his Service. But this is a certain ſign that they have little Heart and Affection to it: If they had, it would not ſeem a trouble to them to ſhew it, by all the *Outward Demonſtrations* that the Scriptures recommend to us. A *devout Heart* bows the *Body*, bends the *Knees*, and lifts up the *Hands* in *Prayer*, without any trouble. And they have reaſon to ſuſpect their *own Hearts*, that find theſe Demonſtrations of Reverence to their *Creator* and *Redeemer*, Uneaſie to them.

This very Pretence ought to ſhew *you*, That it is the Negligence and Dead-heartedneſs of *People* towards *God's Service*, that has baniſhed theſe *Bodily Adorations* out of it. We think it no Diſadvantage to our Church, that we are forc'd to acknowledge, That *your Way of Worſhip* is *much Eaſier than ours*, to ſuch as are preſent at it; it being much leſs trouble

to

to a Man that has no Value for *Religion*, to come into an Aſſembly, and there *ſit down*, and lap his *Cloak* about him, without being obliged to any *Word* or *Geſture* that may diſturb his *Sleep*, or *Worldly Thoughts*, than to be under an *Obligation* every *moment* to ſignifie his *Attention* by ſome *Word* or *Geſture*, under the Penalty of being remarked by the *whole Congregation* for his Negligence and Irreverence; which is the caſe in our Aſſemblies; and, 'tis to be feared, is the *Reaſon* that ſome leave us, and go where they may be at Eaſe and Negligent more ſecurely.

4. I confeſs, in the Fourth place, There are ſome that excuſe themſelves more handſomly, for not Kneeling at their Prayers, *&c.* Say they, *We want Conveniency, we have no room to Kneel.*

To theſe we Anſwer, That where ſuch a thing is omitted out of *Neceſſity*, not *Negligence* or *Contempt*, we believe God will not impute it to them, neither do we accuſe them for it.

But then we cannot but obſerve, that this is not the general Reaſon of Omitting this Part of *God's Worſhip* among you. For,

1. Firſt, It is not your Cuſtom to Kneel in your Publick Worſhip, though you have Conveniency, as is manifeſt from the Practice in all your Meetings; in which I could never

never learn that any one Kneeled: on the contrary you condemn Us who do.

2. When you want *Conveniency* for *Kneeling*, you might *Stand* at your Prayers; which is a *Scripture-poſture* as well as *Kneeling*. You might *bow your Bodies* when you come into *God*'s Preſence; you might continue *Uncovered* whil'ſt in it: But you omit *all theſe*, as well as *Kneeling*; and thereby plainly ſhew, that your Neglect in this Point, is an Effect of *Choice*, not *Neceſſity*.

3. If *Kneeling* at *Publick Prayers* be a Duty, we are obliged to provide *Conveniency* for it; for it is certainly a Sin, to ſuffer any Part of *God*'s *Service* to be omitted, for want of Care. It is as eaſie to provide Conveniency for *Kneeling*, as for *Sitting*, in *Publick Aſſemblies*: And if we conſider how Careful moſt People are to provide Seats for their Eaſe, and how Negligent to make any Proviſion for *Kneeling*; 'Tis but too manifeſt a Sign (whatever is pretended) that they are much more zealous for their Eaſe, than for the Service of *God*.

But what Conveniency is it that Men deſire? It is eaſie for them to have as much Conveniency as St. *Paul* and his Congregation had, when they *kneeled* on the *Shore*, *Act.* 20. If they had the *Devotion* of Saint *Paul*, they would not fail to imitate his Example: *Be ye followers* (ſaith he) *of me, as I*

am

am of Chriſt. St. *Paul* followed the Example of *Chriſt* in this Particular; and ſurely we ought to follow his, except we think our ſelves grown Wiſer than he was, or preferr our Eaſe to our Duty.

But the Truth of the Matter, as it ſeems to me, is, That your Neglecting to Kneel at the *moſt ſolemn* of all Chriſtian *Ordinances*, the *Lord's-Supper*, does harden you againſt *Reverence* in the other Parts of *Divine Worſhip*. And it is no wonder it ſhou'd do ſo; for if *Reverence* be not thought Neceſſary in that Duty, it may well ſeem Unneceſſary in any other.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the Lord's Supper.

SECT. I.

What the Holy Scriptures preſcribe concerning the Frequency of Celebrating it.

I. THE *Fifth* Main and Subſtantial Part of the *ordinary Worſhip* of *God*, in the *Aſſemblies of Chriſtians*, is, the *Celebration of the Lord's-Supper*. It is not to be expected that I ſhould treat concerning the Preparation requiſite in the *Receivers*, or any of thoſe other Circumſtances which are generally agreed on as neceſſary in this Matter, and concerning which ſo many excellent Treatiſes are extant. I ſhall confine my ſelf to one Point, and that is the *Frequency* of it, as a *Publick Act* of *Worſhip*; and Examine, Firſt, What the *Inſtitution* and *Practice* of the *Church of God*, in Scripture, teach us, as to this Particular. Secondly, Compare our *Practice* therewith. And, Thirdly, The *Practice* of thoſe who *differ from us*.

As to the *Frequency* of *Celebrating the Lord's-Supper*, I find many People of Opinion, That the Scriptures have determined nothing in it; and

and that therefore it is intirely left to the Diſcretion of the *Miniſters*, how often they will Celebrate it, and to the People's, how often they will receive it: And that on this Account, every one is left to judge for himſelf, when he will be a Partaker of it, as he thinks it moſt for his *Comfort* and *Edification*; which makes the *Celebration* and *Receiving* it ſo *Arbitrary* a thing, that many never *receive* it at all. And the Univerſal Neglect of it is become one of the *Crying Sins of theſe Kingdoms*, and a great Objection againſt the *Reformation*.

But if we conſider the *Inſtitution* of this *Sacrament*, it will help us to paſs a right Judgment, as to the *Obligation* of the *Frequency* that lies on us. I ſhall endeavour to make this plain in the following Particulars.

1. Our *Saviour*, when he had *bleſſed*, *broken*, and *delivered* the Bread to his *Diſciples*, Commanded them to *Take*, *Eat*, *and Do This*, that they ſaw Him do, *in Remembrance of him*: And *when He had Bleſſed the Cup*, *and given it to them*, he Commanded them to *Drink all of it*; and *as often as they Drink it*, *to do it in Remembrance of him*, 1 Cor. 11. 26. Now I conceive the moſt Natural Interpretation of theſe Words of our *Saviour*, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, and *This do Ye as often as you drink it*, *in Remembrance of Me*, to

be, as if he had ſaid, "We have now Ce-
"lebrated together the *Jewiſh Paſſover* in
"Remembrance of our Fore fathers delive-
"rance out of *Egypt.* But I am about
"purchaſe for you by my Death a much
"more glorious deliverance from the ſlavery
"of *Sin,* and the power of *Hell.* And I
"order you for the future to do this (which
"you ſee done by Me) in Remembrance of
"Me, as what you have hitherto done, has
"been in Remembrance of your Delive-
"rance out of *Egypt.* From this *Inſtitution* it appears,

1. That the *Lord's-Supper* is ſubſtituted in the place of the *Paſſover,* which was Commanded by the *Law* to be Celebrated once in the Year; and that in a place appointed by *God,* where all *Iſrael* were to aſſemble for it.

2. That Our *Saviour* has confin'd us to no Place, or prefixt time for the *Celebration of his Supper* that ſucceeds it; which makes it much more eaſie for us to obſerve it, and renders us much more inexcuſable if we neglect it.

3. Since Our *Saviour* has taken off the Confinement to Time and Place, that made the *Paſſover* ſuch a Burthen. It follows that they who Celebrate it ſeldomer than the *Jews* did their *Paſſover,* muſt needs have leſs regard to the memory of Chriſt's Death, and the

deliverance

deliverance wrought by it, than the *Jews* had to their Deliverance out of *Egypt*: There being no other imaginable reaſon that can tempt them to neglect purifying themſelves for this ſolemnity of *Worſhip*, and frequenting it, but the deadneſs of their *Hearts* towards *Chriſt*, and the want of *Senſe*, *Gratitude* and *Love* towards their Maſter.

4. Chriſt's poſitive Command to *Do this in Remembrance of Him, &c.* muſt oblige us in *ſome* Times, and in *ſome* Circumſtances: And there can be no better way of determining *when* we are obliged to do it, than by obſerving when *God* in his goodneſs give us Opportunity, for either we are then obliged to do it, or elſe we may chooſe whether we will ever do it or no; there being no better means of determining the frequency, than this of *God's* giving us the opportunity. And the ſame Rule holding in all other general, poſitive Commands, ſuch as in thoſe that oblige us to *Charity*, we may be ſure it holds likewiſe in this. Therefore whoever ſlights, or neglects any Opportunity of *Receiving*, which *God* affords him, does ſin as certainly as hewho being enabled by *God* to perform an Act of Charity, and invited by a fit Object, neglects to Relieve him, or ſhuts up his Bowels of Compaſſion againſt him; concerning whom the Scripture aſſures us, That *the Love of God dwells not in him*: And the

Argument is rather ſtronger againſt him who neglects this Holy Sacrament; for how can it be ſuppoſed that Man has a true love for his *Saviour*, or a due ſenſe of his *ſufferings* who refuſes, or neglects to remember the greateſt of all Benefits, in the eaſieſt manner, tho' Commanded to do it by his *Redeemer*, and invited by a fair opportunity of *God*'s own offering.

5. It is manifeſt that if it be not *our own Faults*, we may have an *Opportunity* every *Lord's Day* when we meet together; And therefore that Church is guilty of laying aſide this *Command*, whoſe *Order of Worſhip* doth not require and provide for this Practice. Chriſt's *Command* ſeems to lead us directly to it: For, *Do this in remembrance of Me*, implies that Chriſt was to leave them; that they were to meet together after he was gone; and that he required them to remember him at their Meetings whilſt he was abſent. The very Deſign of our Publick Meetings on the *Lord's-day*, and not on the *Jewiſh Sabbath*, is to remember, and keep up in our Minds a ſenſe of what Chriſt did and ſuffered for us, *till He come again*; and this we are obliged to do, not in ſuch a manner as *our own Invention* ſuggeſts, but by ſuch means as *Chriſt himſelf has preſcribed to us*; that is, by celebrating this *Holy Sacrament*.

It ſeems then probable from the very *Inſti-*

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tution of this *Sacrament*, that *our Saviour* designed it should be a part of *God's Service*, in all the *solemn Assemblies* of *Christians*, as the *Passover* was in the Yearly Assemblies of the *Jews*. To know therefore *how often* Christ requires us to celebrate this *Feast*, we have no more to do, but to enquire *how often* Christ requires us to *Meet together*; that is, at least every *Lord's-Day*.

II. And the same is farther manifest, in the second place, from the *Examples* of the *Apostles*, and of the *Churches of God* in the *New Testament*. They cannot be supposed but to have *understood* what Christ meant by these Words, *Do this in remembrance of Me*; and if it appears that they did make this *Feast* a *constant part* of their *Ordinary Worship*, we may safely conclude, That *Christ* meant it should be so. And here tis observable, *That we do not find any solemn stated Meeting of Christians for Worship in the whole New Testament without it.*

At first the Disciples had their Meetings every Day, and then they likewise daily received this Sacrament, *Acts* 2. 46. *And they continued daily with one Accord in the Temple, and in breaking Bread from House to House*: And St. *Paul* supposes that their Meeting together was on purpose, and with express Design to Celebrate this Feast, 1 *Cor.* 10, 20. *When ye come together therefore into one place,*

this is not to eat the Lord's-Supper; which intimates, That one main Deſign of their coming together, was and ought to have been, *to eat the Lord's Supper*; tho' by their miſbehaviour they ſo corrupted the Ordinance, that it could not be called *His Supper*.

If one ſhould now reprove Chriſtians, whom they obſerve to miſ-behave themſelves in *Church*, in theſe Words: *When you come together into one place, this is not to hear the VVord of God Preached to you; for one is Talking, and another is Sleeping*: VVou'd not every Body conclude, That in the Opinion of the *Reprover*, the *Hearing the VVord of God Preached*, ought to be one End of their coming together? And then ſurely the Apoſtles ſaying that *when you come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper*, &c. gives us ground to conclude, that in his Opinion, *Eating the Lord's Supper* ought to be one conſtant End of our coming together. VVhich is further manifeſt from the Advice he gives them, Verſ. 33. *Wherefore, my Brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.* One End therefore of their coming together, was, as Children come together in a Family at Meal-time, that is, to be fed at their Father's Table: For what the Apoſtle called in the former Verſe, coming together *into one place*; in this Verſe he calls, coming together *to eat*; intimating, that a main end of their

their coming together *into one place*, was *to eat.*

3. When the Meeting of Chriſtians came to be fixed to the *Firſt Day of the Week*, or the *Lord's Day*, the *Breaking of Bread* was likewiſe brought to the ſame Day: So *Acts* 20. 7. *And upon the firſt Day of the Week, when the Diſciples came together to break Bread, Paul preached unto them.* From which words we may conclude two things: Firſt That the Firſt Day of the Week was the Diſciples time of Publick VVorſhip. Secondly, That the Breaking of Bread, or celebrating the Holy *Euchariſt*, was a part of that VVorſhip. The Scripture is as plain for the one as the other. There have been ſome Diſputes raiſed about Changing the Day of Worſhip from the Laſt to the Firſt Day of the Week, and this place is uſually produced to juſtifie the Change; and ſure the ſame place is as clear for the Celebration of the *Lord's-Supper* on that Day, as for the *Obſervation* of the *Day it ſelf*, inſtead of the *Sabbath.* And therefore whoever wilfully paſſes the *Lord's-Day* without it, doth not obſerve it as the Scriptures from the Practice of the Diſciples, direct us to do.

4. I have endeavoured all along to confine my ſelf to the plain words of *Scripture*, and to uſe ſuch Arguments only, as the meaneſt Perſons might be able to judge of from their

Bibles: Yet in a Controverted place of *Scripture* concerning the meaning of a Command of Chriſt, relating to ſome poſitive Duty, I take the conſtant practice of the Church from the Apoſtles downward, to be a good means of determining the ſence of it: and as there is not any Example of a ſtated Aſſembly for Worſhip in the *New-Teſtament* without the *Lord's-Supper*, ſo I think there is not any Example of that Nature in all *Antiquity*. For the truth of which, I appeal to thoſe that are skill'd in it. The nearer we come to the Apoſtles, we ſhall ſtill find the *Lord's-Supper* the more punctually obſerved, as a conſtant part of the Ordinary Service of the Church: And 'tis remarkable, that when firſt ſome who had been preſent at the Prayers and Preaching of the Church began to go away from the *Publick Aſſemblies* without *Receiving* (which was a corruption that came in about 300 Years after Chriſt) it was looked on as ſo great an Innovation and breach of the *Scripture-Rule*, that the Church decreed whoſoever was guilty of it ſhould be Excommunicated. So, particularly the Ninth of thoſe commonly called the *Canons of the Apoſtles*, and the ſecond *Canon of the Council of Antioch*. Thus the Practice of the Church continued for many Ages. And tho' the generality of Men could not be perſuaded conſtantly to partake of the *Lord's-Supper*, after the Diſcipline

cipline of the Church was diſſolved, and the Piety of Men began to cool, yet ſtill it was Celebrated on the *Lord's-Day*, according to the firſt ſettled *Practice of the Church.*

5. And indeed the corrupt practice of the ſolitary Maſſes of the *Papiſts* is a further evidence of its being counted Originally a part of the ordinary Worſhip of *God*, I think it is confeſſed by all, even by the *Papiſts* themſelves, that thoſe Maſſes had their Original from the univerſal corruption and negligence of Chriſtians; for whilſt the People had either Piety or Zeal, they communicated with the Biſhop, or Miniſters, in every *Aſſembly*, at leaſt a competent number of them: But when Piety and Devotion were in a manner loſt in the corrupt Ages of the Church, it came to paſs, that tho' the Miniſter Conſecrated the Elements every *Lord's-day*, according to the Example of the *Holy Scriptures*, and *Antiquity*, yet he could prevail with few or none to receive with him, but was often forced to receive alone. This was a great Corruption and a falling from the *Scripture*-precedent; but the *Roman Church* inſtead of Reforming the Abuſe, by obliging the People to receive as formerly, corrupted her Principles, as well as Practice, and decreed it lawful and ſufficient for the *Prieſt* to receive alone. Y t this abuſe ſhews us what ſhould be, and what has been the *practice*; and that the

the *Church* has conſtantly reckoned the *Lord's-Supper*, as an ordinary part of *Publick Worſhip* in *Chriſtian Aſſemblies* on ſolemn Days; and ſure then to lay it aſide can be termed no leſs than an *Invention* of our own, ſince we can neither in *Scripture*, or in the Church of *God* for 1400 Years together, (which is a ſufficient Commentary on the *Scripture Text*) produce one Example of a ſtated ſolemn Chriſtian Aſſembly without it.

SECT. II.

The Practice of Our Church as to Frequent Communions.

HAving thus conſider'd the Rules and Examples that the *Scriptures* afford us in this point, let us in the ſecond place compare the *Rules* and *Practices of Our Church* with this Pattern. I will not pretend that they come fully up to it, this being the moſt defective part of the *Reformation*; but I doubt not, on view, it will appear, that *Our Church* comes nearer the *Scripture* precedent, than perhaps any other.

'Twas the deſign of the *Reformation* to throw out the corruptions of the *Church of Rome*, and to bring things back to what was practiſed in the *Apoſtles* time, and in the purer Ages of the *Church*. And as to the preſent point

point before us, Our *Reformers* found two corruptions crept in by time: The firſt was, That the *Prieſt* received the *Lord's-Supper* alone, without the people, which deſtroyed the Nature of this *Holy Sacrament*, as a Communion; The ſecond was, That the People thought they had ſufficiently obſerved the *Lord's-day* if they ſaw Maſs, without underſtanding it, or receiving. Our *Church* therefore to *Reform* the firſt of theſe, Ordains, That there ſhall be no Communion except 4 (or 3 at the leaſt) Communicate with the Prieſt. So where 3 are willing to Receive, the Miniſters may proceed to the *Holy Communion* every *Lord's-day*. For our *Saviour* has promiſed that *Where two or three are met together he will be in the midſt of them.*

Three therefore make a Congregation, and have a Title to the Ordinances of *Chriſt*; and there is no reaſon that the Obſtinacy or Negligence of others ſhould hinder ſuch as are willing from Worſhipping *God*, according to his *Inſtitution*; and therefore Our *Church* has taken care to provide for them, by Ordering that ſome part of the Communion-Service be read every *Lord's day*; both with deſign to put all People in mind of their Duty, and to accommodate ſuch as can be prevail'd on herein to live up to the *Rules* of *Scripture*, and the practice of the Primitive Church.

2. 'Tis

2. 'Tis Ordered, That in Cathedral and Collegiate *Churches* and *Colleges* where there are many *Prieſts* and *Deacons*, they ſhall all receive the *Communion* every *Sunday* at the leaſt.

3. That every *Pariſhoner* ſhall Communicate at leaſt three times in the Year, whereof *Eaſter* to be one; and ſurely ſuch as cannot fit themſelves ſo often, muſt, in their own Opinion, be out of the ſtate of Grace, and deſerve to be Excommunicated by the Church.

4. Laſtly, As to our Practice we have prevailed ſo far, that Univerſally the *Lord's-Supper* is Celebrated *Thrice* every Year; and where either our Perſwaſions, Arguments, or Entreaties can prevail with our People, we have Monthly Communions; and in Cities and large Towns, by the changing the *Monthly Days* in ſeveral Churches, People that are devoutly diſpoſed, have Opportunities of Receiving Weekly: And we have reaſon to bleſs God that our Church wants not ſome, and I hope I may ſay many ſuch.

5. Upon the whole, it muſt be confeſſed, That to hold Solemn Aſſemblies of Chriſtians without Communicating, is a corruption of *Popery*, and came in by diſſolution of Manners, and ſlackning of the Diſcipline of the Church; and tho' we have

not

not been able to *Root-out* and *Reform* this *Popiſh Practice* intirely, yet we have done our *Endeavour*; and, by God's Bleſſing, may ſay we have made ſome progreſs in it; inſomuch that if we take that for *Ordinary* which has a conſtant fixed time for its Obſervation; the *Holy Sacrament* is an *Ordinary* part of our publick Service of God.

And I verily perſwade my ſelf, That by *God*'s Aſſiſtance we ſhould have brought our People before now to the Scripture-Order of conſtant Weekly Communicating, had not the Ill Example and Obſtinacy of thoſe that ſeparate from our *Church*, encouraged them in their Negligence, and weakened our Diſcipline: For our *Church* orders *Non Communicants* to be preſented and puniſhed; and our Miniſters do not generally flatter the People in their Sin, or diſſemble their Duty in this point; but frequently and earneſtly, by *Sermons*, *Admonitions*, and *Treatiſes* purpoſely publiſhed to this intent, preſs them to it; and therefore we are blameleſs before God and Man. Nor is it our Fault that the practice of our People is not Reformed, according to the Pattern of the *Apoſtolick Church*, and the Rules of *our Own*: So that we cannot be accuſed of laying aſide the *Commandments of God*, or of teaching any Doctrine of *our own Invention*, in this particular; tho' we are yet

too

too far ſhort of the *Primitive Practice* and *Inſtitution.*

SECT. III.

The Practiſe of the Diſſenters about Frequency of Communicating.

I. I Come now (according to my former Method) to *You*, my Friends, who *Diſſent from us*, and intreat *You* to Examine, with *Me*, your Principles and Practice, by theſe Scripture Rules and Examples: And here firſt I muſt obſerve to you, That you have no fixt or ſet *Times* for the Adminiſtration of this Sacrament; on the contrary, your *Directory* orders, *That the times how often this is to be Celebrated may be conſidered and determined by the Miniſters and other Church-Governours of each Congregation, as they ſhall find moſt convenient for the Comfort and Edification of the People committed to their charge:* By which Rule, the *Lord's-Supper* is Excluded from being any ordinary conſtant part of *God's* Service, it being referred to the Diſcretion of the *Miniſters* and *Elders* of each *Congregation* to determine, as in other occaſional things, how often the People ſhall have the comfort of it. It had been as reaſonable to referr it to their Diſcretion how often the People ſhou'd have the comfort of Hearing the Scriptures

Scriptures read, of joyning in the Praiſes of *God*, or in Prayers to Him; which yet they determine *they are obliged to every Lord's-Day.* Had they made the ſame Rule for the Holy Communion, they had, indeed, conformed to the Scripture-Precedent, and might have pretended to ſome Reformation: But to leave the Celebration of this Feaſt altogether Diſcretionary, I have ſhewed to be directly againſt what we find practiſed in Scripture.

II. VVhereas it is a Corruption of *Popery*, to ſuffer the *People* to be preſent at the Publick Aſſemblies for VVorſhip and Celebration of the *Lord's-Supper*, without being obliged to Receive; your Teachers, inſtead of endeavouring to Reform this *Abuſe* and *Innovation*, have fallen into another Practiſe as unprecedented in *Scripture*, the Excluding this Sacrament intirely from your Ordinary *ſolemn Meetings*. And truly, in this Point, you ſeem more inexcuſable than the *Papiſts* themſelves; for the *Papiſts* order the Elements to be Conſecrated every Lord's-Day, and diſtributed to thoſe that deſire it: But *your Teachers* neither Offer it to the *People*, nor Invite them to it; nay, ſo far are they from it, that they do not ſo much as *afford an Opportunity* to thoſe that deſire to be conſtant Receivers: VVhich is plainly to multiply the Abuſes introduced by *Popery*, inſtead of *Reforming* them.

III. They

III. They rarely preſs their *People* to *Communicate*: They have few *Sermons* or *Diſcourſes* to that purpoſe; and *many* of them condemn our Zeal, for endeavouring to reſtore the *conſtant Communion* precedented in Scripture.

I muſt further make *you* ſenſible, that *your* Practice is yet worſe than *your Principles*. Your *Directory* owns, that the *Communion, or Supper of the Lord, is frequently to be Celebrated*, &c. But it fares with this, as with all other indefinite Rules; they ſignifie only, that *People* may do what they *pleaſe* in the caſe. No body can *certainly* tell what *frequently, many, often*, or *convenient*, ſignifie; and therefore, where only theſe Words are uſed in a Rule, it is little better, than to have no Rule at all, as appears in this very Caſe: For, when *People* were relaxed from the particular and certain Rules of our Church, by the firſt breaking off of thoſe of *your Perſwaſion* from us, the *Lord's-Supper* was laid aſide wholly, for ſeveral Years, by ſome *Congregations*; and at laſt too many came to look on it as a Matter of no conſtant Neceſſity. I appeal to *You*, whether it is not yet reckoned a great thing among many of you, if once in a Year or two a Communion be celebrated in one of your Meetings: nay, among ſome of you, it is often omitted for ſeveral Years together

ther; and in ſome Places, for ten or more. I fear I may ſay, Your *People* generally have *too little Senſe of the Obligation* of Receiving it at all; and *your* Miniſters indulge them *ſo far* in this *Corruption*, that a Man may live *comfortably amongſt you*, and with the *Reputation of a Profeſſor*, to *Thirty* or *Forty* Years of Age, and never Receive at all: And by the beſt Enquiry I cou'd make, I cou'd not *compute* that *One* in *Ten* that *go to your Meetings* ever Receive, *through the whole courſe of their Lives*, notwithſtanding *Chriſt*'s poſitive Command *to do it in remembrance of Him.* So unhappily are Men over-ſeen in laying aſide the *Commands of God*, for *their Own Inventions.* I ſhould be glad to find that I were miſtaken in this *Computation*: In the mean time, *you* muſt give me leave to tell you plainly, That this Practiſe of *Rare* or *No Communion*, is *ſo peculiarly your own*, that I think *you* are *altogether ſingular* in it; and are ſo far from having any Precedent for it in Scripture, that I doubt whether any Precedent can be found for *you*, even amongſt the moſt degenerated or *Barbarous People* that ever called themſelves *Chriſtians.*

And therefore, if you have either any true Regard for Scripture, or Reverence for the *Conſtant* and *Univerſal* Practice of the *Church* of *God*. *You* ought to reflect upon *your*

Practice herein; and *conſider* how *You* can anſwer it to *God*, or *your Conſciences*.

I will not Examine the *Reaſons*, commonly given for *your* Omiſſions in this weighty Affair, ſince it is manifeſt no *Reaſon* of Man's *Invention* ought to be admitted for direct *Diſobedience* to *Chriſt*'s *Command*. If you are *Chriſtians* in earneſt, you ought, as often as you have *Opportunity*, to remember the great *Love* of *Our Lord and Maſter*, as he has Commanded; And *your* Miniſters ought to take care to afford *you* frequently ſuch *Opportunities*. If *you* or *they* neglect this, I do not ſee how *you* can with *Reaſon* inſiſt ſo much on the *Purity* and *Obſervation* of Chriſt's *Inſtitution*.

CONCLU-

CONCLUSION.

I Have gone through the *Five Principal* Parts of the *Publick Worſhip of God*; and (I hope) in all of them have made good what I firſt undertook; and ſhewed, that there needs no more to juſtifie the *Publick Service* of our Church, than to compare it with the *Rules* and *Examples* of *Scripture*. I have only a few Words to add, by way of *Concluſion*, firſt to my Brethren of the *Clergy*, and then to the *Laity* who are under my Charge.

To the Conforming CLERGY *of* DERRY.

1. AND Firſt, as to you, *My Brethren*, that are of *Our Communion*, and own *My Authority*, let Me, as a Brother, and a Fellow-Labourer, Exhort you to be Thankful to God, that has Entruſted you with ſuch an Excellent Miniſtry and Service; which being built on ſo ſure a Foundation as the *Word of God*, can never be ſhaken, or put

you to any great Difficulty to defend it, ſince you need no more than the plain Words of your Bibles, without *Gloſs*, or *Commentators*, to aſſert and juſtifie it.

2. Let me recommend to you Reverence, Devotion and Diligence, in the Uſe of this *Service*. I have already obſerved, That there is a Language of *Geſtures* rather more ſignificant and affecting than that of Words. It becomes us therefore, not only to Love and Uſe our *Service*, but likewiſe to recommend it to the *People*, by a diſtinct and affectionate manner of Pronouncing and Reading it, and by a devout and grave Behaviour at it. This can never be preſſed too much on you, or on others by you; ſince 'tis abſolutely neceſſary to give *Life* and *Efficacy* to it; as the contrary will expoſe the *beſt* and *moſt ſacred* thing to *contempt*, and bring a greater Diſparagement on our *Service*, than all *Our Adverſaries* Endeavours can ever do. Though *Our Service* be Appointed by *God*, and *Warranted by Scripture*; yet even *God's Appointments* are *Abominations* to him, when ſeparated from the *heart*, and are only acceptable to him, as they contribute to *Inward Devotion*. Let me therefore intreat you to labour ſo to *perform* the *Service of Our Church*, that it may attain the End for which *God* has deſign'd *His Worſhip*.

3. Since

3. Since the *Service of Our Church* is ſuch as *God* has required in his *Word*, let nothing diſcourage us in the Uſe of it: Let us remember that we perform it in Obedience to *God*; And though ſome Hate, ſome Revile, and ſome Deſpiſe it, yet that the Authour of it is able to Vindicate it This is no New Thing, 'Tis the Entertainment the World has generally given *God's Service*, and his *Truths*: And therefore neither Obſtinacy, Perverſeneſs, or Negligence of the People, whom you are to Perſwade, ought to Diſcourage you. Be Diligent, be Conſtant be Reſolute, and be aſſured, that *God* will always give you Succeſs, ſo far as is neceſſary to ſupport his *Truth*. All Means are therefore to be attempted; and when one faileth, another is to be applied: And the more averſe People ſeem to the Way of *Worſhip* preſcribed by *God*, and the more eager they are for any Corruption, the more Induſtry is to be uſed to bring them off from it; and when all other Means fail, earneſt *Prayers* and *Interceſſions* with *God* ſtill remain: We are never to Deſpair, whilſt we have *God's Truth* on our ſide, though whole *Provinces* ſhould fall off from the Church; As *all they in* Aſia *did from Saint* Paul. 2 *Tim.* 1. 15. Though few or none *ſhould believe our Report*, as it happened to

Our *Saviour* Himself; yet *God* will have a Reward for the Faithful Endeavours of his Ministers: And therefore we must not desist, though People seem Obstinate; but *in season, and out of season*, by Exhortation and Writing, by all Means of Importunity and Industry, we must press them to their Duty, and endeavour to bring them back to the Purity of *God's Worship*, as he has instituted it.

4. Let me put you in mind, That the *Motives* you have to do your Duty, are the most Noble and Generous that can be: And you have this Advantage, that you cannot be supposed to be zealous in your Office, out of any private Interest, or prospect of particular Profit. Your Maintenance and Preferments are ascertained to you by Law, and do not depend on the Voluntary Contribution of the People. And as you are under no Temptation to please them, by complying with their Vices or Humours; so neither can you be suspected to be Diligent and Industrious in your Office, out of any such mean Considerations. Since therefore what Pains you take, may well be supposed to proceed only from Sense of Duty, and the Love of God, let me intreat you to labour in it. It is certain, That neither Popularity, Faction, nor Worldly Interest, can

can influence you to this, ſo as they may ſome, that have no other way to attain to Honour, or Support, but by making or gaining a Party. But God forbid that true Piety and Zeal for Souls, ſhould work leſs effectually upon you, than thoſe carnal and ſervile *Motives* do on others.

Let me therefore earneſtly encourage and intreat you to do it more and more, and that you will endeavour to *become all things to all Men*; and decline none of thoſe *Arts* which are allowable, when applied, to gain the People to *Truth* and *Holineſs*; but very Wicked, when employed to divide and ſeduce them.

5. Let me put you in mind, That you are *Miniſters* of the *Goſpel*, and not of a *Party*: And therefore it concerns you to mind the common Intereſt of *Holineſs* and *Religion*, more than thoſe Differences that are often of little Concern in themſelves, and are inſiſted on only as the Occaſions and Badges of thoſe People, who being reſolved to ſeparate themſelves, are obliged to take up little Differences for a Diſtinction. The leſs you meddle with theſe Diſputes, it is commonly the better: And indeed it is not prudent to mention them, till Mens Minds be fitted and prepared by a

true Senſe of the great Duties of *Religion*; And then the beſt way, perhaps, will be, to ſhew of what little weight they are, to cauſe or juſtifie Diviſions or Quarrels amongſt Chriſtians.

I am well aware that it may be objected to us, That whilſt we preſs the great *Duties* of the Firſt and Second *Table*, and ſpend our Pains and Diligence in Defending our *Common Chriſtianity* againſt *Papiſts*, *Socinians*, *Deiſts* and *Atheiſts*, thoſe that are our *Adverſaries* in theſe leſſer Points, have made their Advantage of Our being employed againſt the *Common Enemy*, to undermine us with the People; nay, that ſome of them have even joined with thoſe *Enemies* to pull down *Our Conſtitution*. But yet I perſwade my ſelf, that we are in leſs hazard from them, whilſt we do our Duty, and apply our ſelves to the great and common Obligations of *Our Holy Religion*, than if we ſhould leave *this* expoſed to the Aſſaults of *Our common Enemies*, to guard our ſelves from the Attempts of ſuch *back Friends*. We muſt therefore have an Eye to them; but the other, the Great and Common *Truths* and *Duties* of the *Goſpel*, muſt be our main Buſineſs.

I might

I might add many more *Remarks* proper to my preſent Subject, but I know your own *Prudence* and *Obſervation* are ſufficient to ſuggeſt them to you; I ſhall only add my *Prayers* for you, that *God* will encreaſe your *Wiſdom* and *Zeal*, and effectually turn them to his own Glory.

To the Diſſenting Miniſters of Derry.

BUt as to *You*, *My Brethren*, That diſown my *Communion* and *Authority*, I have reaſon to fear that what I ſhall offer to you, may receive ſome prejudices from my *Station* and *Character*, with which you ſeem offended: Yet *reaſon is reaſon* from whomſoever it proceeds; and I only deſire that you would weigh ſeriouſly what I have here offered, in defence of the *Service of Our Church*; and if the *Arguments* do not convince *You*, yet let me *pray You* to reflect thus far on the matter, as to remember that all Mens minds are not of the ſame make; and that it becomes *You*, and all *good Men*, at leaſt to treat *Our Service* with reſpect; ſince we believe, and think we have proved, That it is clearly

founded

founded *on the Word of God.* It will not excuſe ſcurrilous or unſeemly Reflections on it, to ſay that we are miſtaken: For all *Men* are fallible, and you may as well be miſtaken as you ſuppoſe *We* are; And therefore leſt *You* ſhould be in the wrong, it will be the ſafeſt way to be *modeſt* in *cenſuring.*

No Man ought to take it ill that another propoſes *Reaſons* againſt his *Opinion*; but to *ſcoff at, or revile* any *practice*, or *opinion* that another believes to be founded on the *Word of God*, is not only ill Manners, but is of dangerous Conſequence; being apt to breed *Bitterneſs*, and *Animoſities* between the Parties: And if it ſhould happen in a Caſe where the *Practice*, or *Opinion* is really *Warranted* by the *Word of God*, it would be a *Blaſphemy* and *Impiety.* And therefore in all Matters of *Religion* we ought to avoid this manner of Treatment; and whatever *Book* uſes it, we need trouble our ſelves no farther with it, for it certainly is written only to ſerve a Party, and not *Truth.*

There is another thing that in *Juſtice* I think I may requeſt of *You*, which is, That in *Your Worſhip* and *Practice*, *You* will not make the Difference between us ſeem greater than really it is. To abſtain from a thing confeſſed to be lawful in the *Service of God*, meerly

ly becauſe obſerved by us, is ſurely very far from a *Spirit* of *Meekneſs* and *Moderation*: And therefore I may hope that *you* will not *Indulge Your People* in ſuch affected diſtances, that can ſerve to no other purpoſe, but to make Parties irreconcilable; and muſt proceed from a greater *bitterneſs of Spirit* than a *good Man* can be guilty of towards any Chriſtian.

And that *You* may underſtand my Mind the better in this Matter, I will give *You* a few Inſtances that I hope will be inoffenſive; and in which we may juſtly expect *Your Compliance.*

1. The firſt is in the uſe of the *Lord's-Prayer* which is owned in *Your* larger Catechiſm, to be *Not only for Direction, as a Pattern according to which we are to make other Prayers, but may be alſo uſed as a Prayer.* And in your *Directory* 'tis recommended to *be uſed in the Prayers of the Church.* Yet I am informed that *You, my Brethren,* of this Dioceſs, who ſeparate from *Our Communion,* do univerſally neglect it, and thereby confirm *Your Hearers* in an Opinion too common amongſt them, that all *Forms of Prayer* are unlawful. And that for no other Reaſon, that I can learn, but to keep up a Difference from us in Practice, where we really agree in Point of Doctrine.

2. Your

2. Your *ſitting at Publick Prayers,* may be a ſecond Inſtance, in which we may reaſonably expect ſome *Reformation.* 'Tis a very irreverent thing in it ſelf, againſt the *Command* and *Examples* of *Scripture,* as I think I have ſufficiently ſhewed, and againſt the *Opinion* of *Your* beſt *Caſuiſts,* particularly of Dr. *Ames, de Conſcientia,* Lib. 4. Cap. 18. *Seſſio per ſe non eſt geſtus Orandi, quia nullam exprimit reverentiam neque in Scripturis approbatur.* That is, *Sitting is not of it ſelf a poſture of Prayer, becauſe it expreſſes no Reverence, neither is it approved in Scripture.* Yet I underſtand that this is the general Poſture in which your *People* offer their publick Prayers; and either becauſe it is for their Eaſe, or becauſe you are unwilling to ſeem to lay any ſtreſs on outward Performances; or laſtly, leſt you ſhou'd be like us, *you* indulge them in it; and ſome of them are ſo ignorant, that they reckon it a piece of Superſtition in us to kneel at our Prayers; and are averſe to our Service, amongſt other Reaſons, becauſe this is required at it. Which Notions, I ſuppoſe, you your ſelves do not approve; and therefore we may juſtly expect that you ſhou'd endeavour to inform *your People* better, and bring them to a Compliance with the Rules of Decency in their *Religious Performances.*

3. My Third Inſtance ſhall be in the Matter of the *Holy Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper.* I ſuppoſe no ſerious conſidering Perſons amongſt *you* can deny but the celebrating it ſo ſeldom as it is done in *your* Meetings, and the *Peoples* backwardneſs in Receiving it, are very great Faults; and therefore we may reaſonably expect that you ſhould preſs home to *your People* the Danger of their Neglect, and repreſent to them truly the ſin of it, ſo as not to ſuffer any to aſſume the Name of a *Profeſſor* or a *Religious Perſon*, that doth not in ſome meaſure come up to the Scriptures-Precedent in this particular; and withal, ſo ordered the celebration thereof, that every one may have ſufficient Opportunities to Receive, as the firſt Chriſtians did; which in your preſent way of managing, is impoſſible: From whence *you* may be ſure, *yours* is not the *Scripture-way*, and therefore needs *Reformation.*

4. Let me put *you* in mind, That it is ordered by *your Directory* (as I have already obſerved) that *ordinarily one Chapter of each Teſtament be read at every Meeting, and ſometimes more.* I think *you* cannot diſpenſe with this Rule, without being liable to Juſt Cenſure, from all that have a true value for the *Word of God*: And yet I am informed that there

there is not one of *your Meetings* in this *Dioceſs*, where it is obſerved to the great Detriment of our *common Chriſtianity*, and offence of *your* Brethren. I know the People are fonder of Sermons and Lectures of Humane Compoſure, than of the pure *Word of God* in its Naked Simplicity; but you know this to be a carnal and ſinful Humour in them; And God forbid any that claims to be a Miniſter of the Goſpel ſhou'd indulge them in it: And therefore as *you* wou'd maintain a due Reverence in the *People* for the *Word of God*, I think we may expect your Conformity to us in this Particular.

5. I ſuppoſe *you* very well know that the moſt learned and ſober *Non-conformiſts* do own that *Occaſional* Communion with our Church is lawful, and that *People* had better come to our *Worſhip* (at leaſt where he that Officiates is of *Ability* and *Sobriety*) than ſit at home on the *Lord's-Day*, or frequent no Aſſemblies at all; And *you* cannot be ignorant that many Thouſands in theſe Parts neglect all *Publick Worſhip*, and many ſuffer their Children to die Unbaptized, for want of Miniſters of their *own Communion*; And therefore in this Caſe, it is a Point of Juſtice due to the *Souls* of theſe *Poor People*, and to our common Chriſtianity, to let them know that it is their Duty to join with us both in *Worſhip* and *Sacraments*,

craments, as far as *your* Brethren in *England* have Allowed it on ſuch Occaſions.

6. You are ſenſible that amongſt thoſe Proteſtants that diſſent from our Church, ſome are *Congregational*, and others *Presbyterians*; You of this *Dioceſs* where I am concerned, profeſs to be of this latter Sort, and agree with us in owning that by Chriſt's Appointment, the particular Churches in convenient Diſtricts, ought according to Scripture-Precedents, to Aſſociate under one Government; and theſe again to Unite themſelves into greater Combinations of *Provincial* and *National* Churches. The Difference between *You* and *Us* is concerning theſe particular Diſtricts; Namely, Whether the Government of them ought to be in a *Presbytery*, with a *Biſhop* as Preſident and Governor, by Chriſt's Appointment; or in a *College of Presbyters abſolutely Equal*. So then, we both own *National* and *Provincial Churches*, as well as ſingle *Worſhipping Congregations*; but the *Congregational Diſſenters* deny that Chriſt inſtituted any other Church, beſides a ſingle Congregation; and affirm that all other Churches, ſuch as *Claſſical*, *Provincical*, or *National*, are *Humane Inventions*; and that every ſingle *Congregation* is *Independent*, and may indeed keep a fair Correſpondence with its Neighbour-*Congregations*, but is not under any common

mon Government with them. Theſe laſt are the avowed Principles of Mr. *Baxter*, Dr. *Owen*, Mr *Lob*, Mr. *Humphrys*, Mr. *Boyſe*, Mr. *Alſop*, Mr. *Clerkſon*, and generally of all the late Defenders of the *Diſſenters* Cauſe in *England* and *Ireland*, that I have met with. Now it is manifeſt that theſe Principles of theirs, are much more different from your Principles, than ours are; And the difference is much greater, and more material. For it is poſſible on your Principles and ours to preſerve Unity, and to keep up ſome value for Excommunication, and other Cenſures of the Church; ſince he who is cenſured in one Church cannot be received into another, neither with you, nor us: Whereas in the *Congregational way*, he that is Excommunicated in one *Congregation*, may remove to another, or ſet up one for himſelf if he pleaſes; at the worſt, if he ſhou'd, it wou'd be counted *but an Irregularity*. Theſe Principles are deſtructive to the Peace and Unity of the Church, as well as to our *common Cauſe*; and our Learned Men have carefully Anſwered all the principal Writers of that ſort; ſo that no Books of that kind have remained Unanſwered, but ſuch only as were meer Repetitions of what had been ſaid and anſwered before. I do not remember any of you have of late undertaken the Defence of this important Truth; tho' the *Aſſembly*

of

of Divines in their *Humble Advice concerning Church-Government* (which I ſuppoſe you approve) do prove it from the Holy Scriptures in their Title of *Claſſical Aſſemblies.* Now we think, in Juſtice to your Own Cauſe, as well as to Us, you ought to warn *your People* againſt thoſe *Books* that maintain Principles contrary to us both; at leaſt not to bear them in hand, that *thoſe Books* written *againſt Us*, make *for You*; for this will appear a great piece of Inſincerity, as well as Ingratitude; and will tempt the *World* to believe that you are willing to encourage Principles deſtructive to *your own Cauſe*, (as the Principles of *thoſe Books* manifeſtly are in this very *Point*) ſo they do but ſerve a Turn and ſtrengthen your Party amongſt the ignorant *People.*

6. Laſtly, I think we may juſtly expect from *you* a ready Concurrence with us to beat down ſuch Vices and Immoralities as are confeſſed on all hands to be againſt our common Chriſtianity; ſuch as *Adultery, Fornication, Blaſphemy, Profanation of the Lord's-Day*, &c. And ſince the *Biſhops Courts* are Legally impowred to puniſh theſe, and many are guilty of them who yet will not appear or ſubmit to acknowledge their Sins, and upon that Account are Excommunicated: the leaſt that can be expected from you in theſe

Caſes, is, Not to encourage ſuch Sinners in their Obſtinacy, or to admit them to Communion amongſt *You*, whilſt they lie under ſuch Cenſures; which might be a means to Reform, in ſome meaſure, theſe Crying Vices.

Theſe are but a few of thoſe things that might be inſtanc'd; in which we may concurr in our *Practice* as well as we do in our *Opinions*; and if we did, I perſwade my ſelf, that tho' they did not bring us to one *Religious Communion*, yet they might much contribute to our living eaſily with one another, and take off that Uncharitableneſs which our *Religious Diſſentions* are apt to cauſe amongſt us: However, it wou'd be a great Satisfaction to Me, and I ſhould reckon it ſome kind of Succeſs in my Office, if I cou'd prevail with any ſort of *People*, that profeſs to meet in the Name of *Chriſt*, to come nearer to his *Inſtitutions* in their *Worſhip*; tho' I ſhould not be able to perſwade them to the *Communion* whereof I am a Member.

To

To the Conforming LAITY *of the Dioceſs of* DERRY.

AS to You, my *Friends* and *Brethren* of the *Laity*, who profeſs your ſelves Members of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, It hath pleaſed God to place Me *amongſt you*, and to give me an Inſpection *over you*; and 'tis chiefly on *your Account* that I have written and publiſhed this Treatiſe, that it may be a Pledge and Teſtimony to you of my concern for you, and make my care to reach as far as may be amongſt you. I hope my Labours this way may be Uſeful to you, to ſettle the Minds of the Doubtful, and to awaken you all to Diligence and Zeal in the performance of the Service of God.

The great Principles of *your* Religion, as *you* are *Members* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, are Uncontroverted on all hands; and I have here endeavoured to ſhew that your *particular Way of Worſhip* is warranted by the Holy Scriptures. You have reaſon to bleſs God, that He has afforded you ſo many Conveniencies of frequenting it; in which

He has been pleaſed to give you ſo manifeſt Advantage above your *Diſſenting Neighbours*, that notwithſtanding their Numerouſneſs, you have Five Places for Worſhip, for One that they have. This will render you inexcuſable, if you neglect Attendance at them, or ſpend any *Lord's-Day* (as is too common in this Country) in a meer Reſt from *Labour*, without any *Publick Worſhip*.

I muſt likewiſe put *you* in mind, that our *Service* is not only fitted for the Publick, but is likewiſe proper for private Families; and therefore I would adviſe *you* to make uſe of the Words with which Our Church has furniſhed you, in *your* Houſes, as well as in the Church. At leaſt to uſe ſuch ſelect *Hymns* and *Collects* as ſeem moſt adapted to that purpoſe. And at more ſolemn times I conceive our *Litany* is as full and proper a Service as any Maſter of a Family can deſire to offer to *God*.

I muſt therefore moſt earneſtly and paſſionately exhort *you*, by the Name of Our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, for his Church's ſake, and *your* own, that *you* will add *Diligence* and *Zeal* to this *your* reaſonable Service, and prepare *your* Hearts to ſeek the *Lord your God* in his *Holy Worſhip*. And particularly that

you

you wou'd endeavour to convince the World, that it is not *Faction*, or a *Party you* contend for, but the *Fruits of Righteouſneſs*; and thereupon ſtrive rather to *out-live* thoſe that differ from *You*, than to *out-argue* them. Let the innocency of *your* Lives, and *your* Chriſtian Moderation convince them of the unreaſonableneſs of their ſeparation from *You*.

I beſeech the *God* and *Father of Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* to multiply his *Grace* and *Peace* upon *You*; and to influence *You* by his *Holy Spirit*, that *You* may be perfect in every good *Work*; and particularly in that of *Worſhipping* him in *Purity* and *Holineſs*.

To the Diſſenting-LAITY of the Dioceſs of DERRY.

AS to *You*, *My Friends*, that diſſent from Our *Communion*, it remains only, that I beſeech *You* in the *Spirit of Meekneſs*, (as one that is appointed by the Providence of *God*, and the care of a Chriſtian Magiſtracy, to watch over *Your Souls*) That *You* will ſeriouſly conſider, and lay to heart what I have here tender'd to *You*. I cannot prevail with you to come and receive *Inſtruction* from my Mouth; and therefore I have taken this way to inform *You*. I will only add a few *Obſervations*, which I recommend to *You*, and ſhall leave the Succeſs intirely to *God*.

1. Therefore *You* may obſerve that in this Treatiſe I have not led *You* into long *Reaſonings*, or the Intricacies of *Humane Learning*; but I have referred *You* to *your Bibles*, and *You* need go no further than to them to be ſatisfied whether the things I have ſaid be as I have repreſented them or not. Thoſe of *Beræa* are reckoned a *Noble People* (Acts 17.11.) becauſe they *ſearched the Scriptures*, and I pray moſt heartily to *God* to give *You* a part in that *Nobleneſs*

of

of mind, that *You* may ſearch and find the *Truth*.

2. I wou'd deſire *You* to obſerve that it ever has been, and in all probability ever will be the humour of the *World*, to be more fond of *Their Own Inventions* than of what *God* Commands. If we look thro' the whole Scriptures we ſhall find, that the *Prophets* ſent by *God*, the Doctrines revealed by him, and the *Worſhip* he Commanded, have had but ill Entertainment amongſt the People. There never appeared half ſo much Zeal or Inclination in the generality of Men, for the True *God* and his *Worſhip*, as for the falſe *God's*, and their *Prophets*. And there is an obvious natural reaſon for it, ſince what Man invents muſt needs have a nearer agreement to the Carnal and Corrupt Inclinations of our depraved Nature, than what *God* preſcribes: which is the very Reaſon that induces Men to change the *Inſtitutions* of *God*, and ſubſtitute their own *Inventions* inſtead of them. A thing that would never come into any Man's Mind, if he did not find more eaſe or gratification to his Humour in them, than in obſerving *God*'s Commandments.

If it were proper to referr *you* to the Hiſtory of the Church, you would find that moſt of all the Corruptions in the *Worſhip* of

God, were introduced by the Fondneſs and violent Inclinations of the People for them; and that the Church-Governours did long oppoſe them, and were brought with difficulty at laſt to comply with them. Thus the Worſhip of Images, Prayers for the Dead, Purgatory, the Interceſſion of Saints, Half-Communion, being preſent at Church-Aſſemblies without Receiving the *Lord's-Supper*, and Worſhipping the Hoſt, were all vulgar Practices at firſt, againſt the Opinion of the Governours of the Church, who generally Oppoſed and Condemned them; but being Humane Inventions, the People were ſo violent for them, that there was no withſtanding them; ſo that if the Governours they had would not comply, the People did ſet up thoſe that would.

Now let me intreat you to reflect a little, and conſider with all ſeriouſneſs, whether there may not be ſomething like this in your own Caſe, eſpecially in the Matter of Extemporary Prayers. It is plain, you have brought them into Practice, againſt the Opinion and Conſtitution of the Church-Governours, and of the Firſt Reformers, who all did ſettle *Liturgies* in the Churches which they Reformed: This *Knox* did in *Scotland*, whoſe *Liturgy* we have ready to produce,

to

to the Conviction of thoſe who pretend to be his *Succeſſors*, and yet condemn *Forms of Prayer* as Unlawful. This *Luther* did for *Germany*, and *Calvin* for *Geneva*, and for the *French* Church, whoſe *Liturgies* are ſtill uſed by them. Yet I find this weighs not much with you, though you ſeem to me to have little to oppoſe to it, beſides a ſtrange *Fondneſs* and *Paſſion* you have entertained for the contrary. And let me tell *you*, That it is no hard matter to give a Reaſon why the generality of the *People* are better pleaſed with ſuch *Extemporary Prayers*, than with *Forms*: For can any one wonder that a Prayer which *People* never heard before, and is adapted to the *Fancies* and *Humours* of a *Party*, with all the Advantages which *Novelty* gives, ſhould gratifie carnal and itching Ears, more than the fix'd and ſettl'd Prayers of a Church, or that *Form* dictated by Chriſt Himſelf? To joyn in theſe with *Devotion*, requires us duly to prepare our Hearts, to ſtrain and lift up our Minds with much Seriouſneſs and Attention, or we cannot be affected by them; whereas there is a Pleaſure, and a kind of Senſual Delight, in the Novelty of the other *Prayers*; and the Tone with which they are ſometimes delivered, makes the *Hearers* imaginarily Devout, though they come to them without taking Pains to ſtrain their Minds to true *Devotion*. But you

ought

ought to remember that *Images* and *Reliques*; and *Mediatory Saints*, had the very ſame Effect on People long ago; which made them ſo fond of them, that they brought them into their *Worſhip*, in ſpite of the Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church, as you have now brought in Extemporary Prayers: But 'tis rare to find the generality of Men fond of what is truly Spiritual: And therefore People's Fondneſs of your peculiar Way of *Worſhip*, is ſo far from being an Argument for it, as I find ſome of you uſe it, that, on the contrary, it is a ſhrewd Preſumption that it is not from *God*; eſpecially ſince ill People are fond of it, as well as good: as is manifeſt from many undeniable Inſtances; which could not be ſo, if it were Truly, and of it ſelf, Spiritual.

3. I would deſire *you* to conſider, that nothing can generally induce *Our Clergy* to decline theſe *Extemporary Prayers*, but their *Conſcience* and *Conviction* that they are not convenient in the Publick Service of God. 'Tis manifeſt, that *Extemporary Prayers* would be much more eaſie to moſt of us, and leſs burthenſom than the Service we uſe: *You* may think otherwiſe, but aſſure your ſelves that you are miſtaken; and I dare appeal to thoſe that have tried *both*, whether is moſt eaſie: There are ſuch both

amongſt

amongſt *You* and *Us* who have made the Experiment; and I dare referr it to them to declare, on their *Conſciences*, which of the two Services they look on to be the greater burthen to him that performs them. Whatever *You* may think, if we would Indulge our ſelves, it were no hard matter for the meaneſt of *Us*, to paſs an *Extemporary Prayer* on our *Auditory*, or to turn the Heads of our Sermons into one.

Laſtly, I have one thing which I would more-eſpecially requeſt of *You*, that you would believe that I ſincerely and heartily deſire and ſtudy the good of *your Souls*; and that I have in this Treatiſe endeavoured to promote it, and by *God's Aſſiſtance* ever ſhall in all my Undertakings.

And if *You* had the ſame Apprehenſions with *Me*, *You* would not wonder at my Concern in this Matter; for how is it poſſible that any Man that has a Zeal for the *Purity* of *God's Worſhip*, ſhould not have his *Spirit* moved within him, to ſee a well-meaning People ſo ſtrangely miſ-led, as to content themſelves to meet together, perhaps, for ſome Years, with a deſign to *Worſhip God*, and yet hardly ever ſee or hear any thing of *God's immediate Appointment in their Meetings*. Now to my thoughts this is manifeſtly the caſe of many of *You*; ſince

ſince a Man may frequent ſome *Meetings* amongſt *You* for ſome Years, and never hear a *Prayer*, a *Pſalm*, or *Chapter*, which has been immediately dictated by *God*, and never be called on to bow his Knee to *God*, or ſee either *Miniſter* or *People* addreſs themſelves to him in that humble Poſture. Laſtly, Never ſee any Body offer to Adminiſter, or deſire to Receive the *Food of Life* in the *Lord's-Supper*. Theſe are Melancholy Reflections to me, who believe that *God* has required theſe in his *Worſhip*: and therefore I hope *you* will take it in good part, that I endeavour to reſtore them to *You*.

I have only to add my moſt earneſt Prayers to *God* for *You*: And to beſeech him who is the *God* of Mercy, and Purchaſer of his Church, by a Price Ineſtimable, to vouchſafe his Bleſſing to theſe my Endeavours, for *your Souls Inſtruction*; That *You* may reap the Benefit, and I the Comfort of them, in the great Day of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who only is the True Teacher of Souls by his Spirit, and is able to Seal the *Inſtructions* of his Miniſters to *Your* Hearts, to open the Eyes of *Your* Underſtandings, and to guide *You* into all *Truth*.

FINIS.